NGE: Sincerely Yours

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[Undergoing revision] In 2 universes, Shinji and Asuka were triggers of 3I of their own worlds respectively. Lilith fulfilled their wishes: TO BE BACK. They traveled back in time to the same universe, after rejecting their worlds' instrumentality. They both wanted to change things in the new universe and rebuild their love. However, they didn't know about each other's true origin.

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NGE: Sincerely Yours

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Prologue: Shinji

AN: Hello everyone! This is the first time I have ever written a fanfiction, and I am NOT a proficient English speaker, just mind you. So it is expected that there will be grammatical mistakes. This piece of fiction takes place after eoe, but eoe in two different universes. In both universes Shinji and Asuka (Soryu, not Shikinami, mind you) had developed a romantic relationship, but the stories were different. In one universe, Shinji was the trigger of 3I. In another universe, Asuka was the trigger. In the Instrumentality world, they both rejected the instrumentality, but instead of coming out of the soup, they both traveled to another parallel universe. Two time travelers in the same universe, they both love each other (but right now they don't know about the fact that they are both time-travelers), and they both have determination. This story is what happens after the time travel.

P.S. It is very welcome to review my work. And it is even more welcome that someone may find my premise interesting and decides to rewrite my work. I will NOT take any credit to any rewrites to this work. And I do not own Evangelion. I wish I do, tho, to just change the ending of ROE. lol

CHAPTER 1: Prologue: Shinji

White. Everything was white.

Then suddenly, everything around him, went red, just like… like LCL.

Shinji Ikari shot open his eyes, trying to remember what had happened. He remembered the invasion of NERV. He remembered fighting MP EVAs, alongside the red Unit 02; he remembered… being impaled by replicas of the Lance of Longinus. Then… he saw Unit 02 was torn into shreds, heard her screaming, while he couldn't do anything but watch.

Then he lost his insanity.

Third Impact happened.

In instrumentality, he saw people's souls, memories, and emotions… He then felt pain. He had lost her, hadn't he?

He remembered his time spent with the German redhead. Their laughter, teases, kisses, and…

It all happened after the 14 th Angel. *You don't know what you have until you lost it.* After being trapped inside his EVA for almost two weeks, the redhead thought he was never coming back, just like… his mother.

When he finally came out, the possibility of losing each other forever finally pushed them to the point where they confessed to each other. Then everything went well.

Until SELEE started their invasion.

Now, he had lost her. *Forever.* He wanted nothing more, nothing from this world. 'Then the world can just die. Like father, Like son.'

Then, he saw Rei Ayanami.

"A-Ayanami?" He stammered.

I am not Ayanami you know, Ikari-kun.

"Then who are you? What is this place? Am I… dead?"

I am a guide. This is Instrumentality. I can feel your pain. I wish no pain to you. What do you wish for?

"I-I-I wa-want hee-r bac-k. I wa-want to see her again. I-want to be back."

Is this what you wish for? To come back, to see her again?

"Y-yes. I just want to see her again."

Back, Back, Back…

His vision again went white.

After like an eternity, Shinji's eyes shot open again, immediately hearing the roaring sound of helicopter's engine. 'Where is this? I thought I was in the sea of LCL.' He looked around, found him strapped into a seat. He then saw purple, and smell lavender perfume. Sitting next to him, was Misato Katsuragi.

His brain froze.

His eyes started to become teary.

'Oh gods oh gods oh gods, is this real?' He remembered this woman, his guardian, his commander, his roommate, and his-*mother* ? He remembered Misato sacrificed herself to get him into his Unit 01. And she succeeded.

He fought back his urge to cry, panting heavily. 'What is this? Is this real? What…' He looked around and found they were flying above the ocean. 'The water is so blue' He thought. As he was wandering in his mental world, a familiar voice snapped him out of it.

"Cool! Cool cool cool cool! Would you guys look at this!? It's a MIG-55 D Transport Helicopter!"

Shinji looked at the source of the voice, a familiar face came in sight.

Kensuke cried out in glee, his camera as always, mere inches away from his face as he tried to take in as much as possible. He had to record this after all. "This is amazing! Thank you, Miss Misato for the change to actually fly in one of these things! Man, it sure is great to have friends like you, right, Shinji?"

'Oh gods, it's Kensuke. He is REAL. And his actions are just like what I remembered. Wait, I REMEMBERED this event. This is right

before…'

His emotional dam broke.

"Shinji, are you okay?" Misato said, a worried look on her face, "Shinji, hey Shinji! Snap out of it!" She mildly smacked Shinji's right arm.

"Ah! Ah, y-yes, Misato-san." If there wasn't a seat belt, Shinji would definitely fly out of the helicopter. "I-I'm fine." He tried so hard to composure himself. 'No, not now. not like this. They… they can't know about me. Not now. Not yet. Oh gods, I could get to see her again… I love you, Asuka. Wait for me.'

"You are not a good liar, Shinji. You were crying."

"Wha-what are you talking about? It's-emm-err- its because of the wind! Ha! Ye! Right. Wind was too strong." Shinji stammered in embarrassment and nervousness.

Misato narrowed her eyes. Just about she was going to push the topic further, she was interrupted by Kensuke, "Oh my god!" He cried, his camera flittering wildly left and right. "Five aircraft carriers and four battleships! What a fleet! Do you see this Shinji!?"

"Yeah, but they seem old. I doubt how they can still float." Misato said.

"That is your cute little boat?" Toji's voice coming out plainly. He felt disappointed after Misato's earlier comment. 'I just wanted to have a nice date with Hikari in Tokyo-3.'

"Oh yeah! She sure is gorgeous!" Kensuke shouted, "That right there is the pride of the United Nations! The glorious super-carrier, the Over the Rainbow!"

Shinji felt relieved after Misato's attention was brought away. 'Oh gods. I got to see her again. I still can't believe it. Is this what you did

for me, Ayanami?' Just as he was thinking about his half-sister, he saw a blue haired girl, floating in the air alongside the helicopter, 50 meters in front of him. 'A-Ayanami?' He blinked, and the girl disappeared. His brain finally finished processing the information around him, allowing him to think. 'This is your gift to me? Well, I will not waste this chance. I will not run away. Never again. Thank you, Ayanami.'

Prologue 2: Asuka

AN: Yahoo! Another short chapter, about what happened to Asuka in her universe (different than the Shinji in the first chapter, just a reminder) during instrumentality. I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 2: Prologue: Asuka

She felt confused.

What is this place? Everything is red. There is no light, no darkness, no EVAs, no NERV, no people, and… no Shinji.

But not exactly no Shinji. She could see him, feel his soul and memories.

She saw herself and Shinji walking on the beach. She saw them dancing at a party. She saw them watching a movie, fingers locked. She saw herself and Shinji wrapping around each other, sleeping in the same bed, peaceful expressions on both of their faces. She could feel the determination when he dove into Mount Asama to save her life. She felt dependence, affection, deep caring… she felt his love for her.

It all started with a kiss.

" *Hey Shinji, do you wanna kiss?"*

He couldn't believe what he thought he had heard. Did his hot, exotic, brilliant, and always confident roommate, one of his few fantasies, have just asked him for a kiss?

" *What?" He immediately unplugged his earbud, eyes looked straight into Asuka's bright blue pupils.*

" *A kiss. You have never kissed, right? Then let's do it."*

This had to be a trick. How is it possible that a girl, who was constantly belittling him, accusing him, insulting him, suddenly asked him for a kiss?

' *This had to be a trick. When I got closer, she will pull back and call me a pervert, and smack me.' "Why?"*

" *Because I'm bored." 'You Baka, why don't you get it? I like you. I… just can't say it. Mein Gott, you are so spineless! Haven't you want to do this for a long time now? Wait, is he rejecting me? No. no no no no. He's just dense. I have to provoke him somehow.'*

" *Because you are bored? But…"*

" *You don't want to kiss a girl on the anniversary of your mom's death? Afraid she may be watching you from the Haven?" She looked at him with a sly grin.*

" *Not really."*

" *Or are you scared?"*

" *I'm not scared of a little kiss!" 'Okay, Shinji. What is the worst that can happen? She calls you a hentai? Nah, I've had a lot of those before. Nothing worse can happen. All in all, it's she who asked for it.'*

" *You brushed your teeth, right?"*

" *Yeah." He nodded.*

' *Mein Gott, he finally accepted it. This Baka.' "Then, here I come."*

Asuka walked closer to him, staring into his dark-blue orbs. She can see the faint flush of his face, and the pulse jumping wildly on the side of his neck. She could feel her pulse jumping as fast. She drew her face closer to his, felt the hot breath of his.

" *Don't breath, cuz it tickles." She locked her lips with his.*

' *Oh gods, this is REALLY happening! She's kissing me! ME! She… likes me?' His brain could not function properly. But he didn't want it to stop. As his oxygen was running out, he felt dizzy, his legs were giving out… and he fell forwards, just to spin around, pushed Asuka backward with him, and pinned Asuka on the table behind her.*

That was a very pleasant memory. They confessed to each other after that night, talked about their childhood dramas, and found themselves a lot alike. It was like they were made out of the same module, but different sides. Which meant they could understand each other perfectly, as no one else could. Then, they were literally glued with each other from then on. They didn't care about other people's opinions. They had each other, and that made them a whole.

But now, she had lost him.

No. She lost him during the attack of 17 th Angel.

The Nephilim called Kaworu, sent by SELEE, approached Shinji, wanted to understand his heart. Kaworu was expecting someone in pain, lonely, and desperate for love. He'd give him that. However, he was totally wrong. He found Shinji to be a shy, caring, and determined person. He found that it was because of love. His love towards her.

Kaworu had no choice but to fulfill his destiny - to initiate third impact.

He came to stop him.

Kaworu had no choice but to fight. With total control of EVA Unit 02, he almost defeated Unit 01. Then Unit 01 went beserker. Shinji reached a synch ratio of 400%. Again. And the final messenger was defeated.

Asuka watched the video feed in horror as his body disintegrated. She almost lost her sanity.

And that was the thing that totally destroyed SELEE's scenario.

Without hesitation, SELEE ordered an attack on NERV immediately. Unit 02 was destroyed, so she had to pilot Unit 01. Inside the entry plug, she calmed down as she felt a familiar sensation. It was like… like the embrace of Shinji.

She fought hard against MP EVAs, but she didn't go for plugs. And the sight of a giant white Rei Ayanami was the last straw put on her already lost mind.

Now she was floating in the infinite red sea. She opened her eyes, and saw Rei Ayanami standing beside her. 'What is she doing here? Stupid doll. Her expression blank as always. I want my Shinji back. Not this emotionless robot.'

Is that what you wish for?

'What? What was that voice?' "Wonder Girl, where am I? What are you doing here? Where is Baka-Shinji?"

This is instrumentality. I am a guide. He is in this world too.

'Wha-Shinji is here as well? Mein Gott, I thought I lost him…' "Wonde- Rei, How can I get my Shinji back?"

Is this what you wish for? To be back with him? Instrumentality here is completed. There is no turning back now. But there is a way, the only way that you can meet him again.

"Yes! I just want to see him again! I-You know I love him!"

If you can bring him happiness, I will help you.

"Of course! He loves me! I love him! I-I ju-just want to see him again."

Well then, my Child.

"Child? What the heck are you tal-" Her vision went white.

Swaying. Shaking. Left. Right. Up. Down.

Asuka Langley Soryu shot open her eyes, found herself staring at an unfamiliar ceiling. Her whole body was swaying with the bed, or rather the whole room was swaying. She looked around; her body wrapped around a thin white sheet; her two red A-10 clips were sitting on the table beside her bed.

'What is this place? It seems like I'm still dizzy, cuz I feel like the world is spinning around me.' She got off the bed, trying to maintain a sense of balance on the floor. 'This place looks familiar. Even the smell of rotten metal feels familiar.' She traced the light source behind her, found it to be a porthole. She immediately hurled herself towards the window. Looking outside, there was only blue and white. They were the sky and the ocean. 'So I'm on a ship, that's why I feel the world's spinning. But what is this ship tho? I don't remember riding any ship this big, much less sleeping on any ship. Except…' Her train of thought CRASHED.

Kaji Ryoji, a triple-spy, ex-guardian of Asuka Langley Soryu, and ex-boyfriend of Misato Katsuragi, was bored. His mission here, well, the *true mission* here, was to deliver a package that contained the embryo of a God - the first Angel - Adam. He checked the package again, made sure it was safe, and stood up. He was going to find something to do. Well, talking with Asuka would be a good choice, although she could be annoying sometimes. 'Wait for me Katsuragi.' He thought, a small grin appeared on his face. He walked towards Asuka's living quarters. Just about he was to knock on her door, the door flung open, a swirl of red racing out, just to crash into his chest.

"Hey, Asuka, what happened?" Kaji said in a worried tone. He had never seen Asuka like this. 'What is this expression on her face? Is she… crying? But she looks ecstatic. So, it's joyful tears.'

"Hmph? Whoa! Ah, hmm, Kaji!" Asuka was trying hard to keep herself from crying in Kaji's chest. 'Mein Gott, this is really happening. How convenient for me to find Kaji just outside the door. I was to find him, to just make sure that I'm actually riding on Over the Rainbow.' "I was to find you! It's so sweet for you to find me!" 'gods, I hope I don't need to do this anymore. But it may be a better idea to hide who I really am. Just for now.' "emmm, why are you here, anyway? Have you change your mind already and decide that I'm cute?"

Kaji rolled his eyes, "Listen Asuka, I'm too old for you. You need to find a boyfriend at your age." Asuka couldn't help but grin wider. 'Oh hell yes I am going to find a boyfriend. Mein Gott, I still can't believe it. I got to see him again!'

She averted her once again teary eyes from the gaze of Kaji, just to see Rei Ayanami standing at the end of the hallway. She blinked, and the girl disappeared.

'Was that Ayanami? She… sent me back here? Well, she's not as a doll as I thought, maybe. Anyways, Thank you, Ayanami.'

Reunion

AN: Ha! Another chapter finished. Just keep in mind that this fast pace of upload is due to my anger towards roe. (personal opinion.) I am starving. So I need to write something by myself. This work is the food I made. Both for me and for you guys. Anyways, enjoy Asuka and Shinji's first encounter.

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 3: Reunion

"Cool cool cool cool cool cool cool cool!" Kensuke shouted, "Any real man will shed tears for these! What an awesome ship!" His hands couldn't stop clicking for even one second.

'I remembered Toji's hat was blown away by the wind. Should I stop it? Surely it will provide a perfect distraction. No, I'm not ready, yet. I don't know if I can keep myself from giving her a tight embrace the second I see her.' Shinji's train of thought was interrupted by Toji's cries, "Hey! Come back!" Shinji chuckled, 'Well, everything proceeds as I remembered. However, this time I will be giving her a better first impression. And DON'T STARE AT HER WHEN THE WIND BLOWS OR I WILL GET SLAPPED.' Sighing internally, Shinji got off the helicopter.

"Yo, Asuka! It's time to get up, kiddo. They are here." Asuka was still in her bed, rubbing her eyes. 'It's not even 30 minutes after I got here. I wish I could come to an earlier point in time, just to prepare myself for what's coming.' "Kaji! I'm coming!" Asuka said as sweet as possible. 'weird,' Kaji thought, 'I haven't told her who's here yet, but she is showing so much enthusiasm. Maybe she guessed it must be the Third Child that I have been talking about these days.'

Changing to the yellow sundress that she had worn during her first meeting with Shinji in her timeline, Asuka walked out of the cabin. Standing on the observation deck, she watched a greenish helicopter made its landing. As soon as the gears touched down, a brown-haired boy came out immediately, a camera held in his hands. 'Just like what I remembered. Now, Soryu, it's time for the show. You have done it before. What's so hard about this? Ha, nothing can stop the Great Asuka Langley Soryu.' She smirked, walked down to the flight deck, and stood 30 meters in front of the helicopter. 'Now, I remembered last time my sundress was blown up by a gust wind, giving those perverted boys hellofa view. It's not gonna happen this time. As for Baka-Shinji, not yet.' She blushed at her last thought, failed to notice a white hat being blown towards her left feet-

SMACK!

Toji was so concentrated on chasing his hat, and he completely ignored the person standing right in front of him, his head crashed straight into her left thigh.

"Ouch!" Asuka cried, almost losing her balance. Looking down, she found the Jock Stooge sitting on the ground, using his hand rubbing his head, eyes looking straight forward. Asuka followed his gaze, just to find him staring at the bottom of her sundress-

SLAP!

"Hey! What was that for!" Toji yelled, standing up.

"It was the viewing fee! Quite a bargain isn't it?" Asuka shouted back.

"It's overpriced!", Toji said, his hands beginning to unbolt his jeans, "Here's your exchange!"

Asuka remembered what was coming, and reacted immediately. She quickly stepped forward, putting her right foot behind Toji's right, her right hand pushed his right shoulder backward. Toji fell onto the flight

deck without resistance. 'I don't have time to deal with you know, Toji. I need to see him now. But I will try not to hurt and get you, or whoever it will be out of the EVA when the 13th attacks.' Unfortunately, Toji had already decided that she was a devil. Ignoring Toji's groans and curses, she stepped forward, just to be greeted by her commander.

"Hello Asuka! It's good to see you have grown a lot of height." Misato smiled at the Second Child, remembering the last she had seen her, Asuka could be still called a little kid.

"Hello Misato! Well my figures have grown as well." She answered her greetings almost with autopilot, since her attention was elsewhere. 'Where is Baka-Shinji? I still don't see him.' She suddenly felt guilty. 'It's good to see Misato again, tho. I have been behaving badly during my early periods living at your apartment. This time, I will try to be nicer. But now, Baka-Shinji.' "Misato, where is this famous Third Child?" Misato looked around, finding Shinji was still staring at the windshield, his mouth moving. 'Gotta give a good first impression to the beautiful Second Child I have been talking about all day long, huh? Shin-chan?' Misato grinned pointing her finger in his direction, "Yes, Asuka. He's right there."

Although she was looking relatively normal on the outside, her heart was pounding crazily. Following Misato's arm, she saw a young boy with dark brown hair, wearing a white shirt and black trousers. He looked scrawny; but Asuka knows that body could produce amazing power, not only when his loved ones are in danger, but also during nights… She blushed, but unnoticed by Misato, who was paying attention to the sitting-on-the-floor-groaning Toji. 'Gods, I'm a bigger perv than Misato is. But only to one person. No one takes away MY Shinji. MINE! And I'm completely his as well.' She walked towards the boy, keeping her smirk on the face.

Meanwhile, just outside the cabin of the helicopter, stood Shinji Ikari. He was looking at the reflection of himself through the windshield, practicing his introduction. "[Hello, Miss Soryu. My name is Ikari Shinji, the pilot of Unit 01, the Third Child. It's nice to meet you.]" He

said his introduction in German again, remembering how his Asuka had taught him. 'Not bad, Shinji. Not bad at all. Now let's go and see her.' He then heard a distinct sound of a slap. He couldn't help but giggle. 'Sounds like what happened has happened.' He made several deep breaths, quietly repeated his introduction in German again, and turned around.

Just to meet the Second Child's bright blue eyes directly.

'Oh my gods, it's really him/her!' They both thought, relief, nervousness, joyfulness, and love flooded their minds. They both stood there for a while, neither of them saying anything. Their brain had just stopped trying to process the flood of emotion. It was Asuka who got her composure back at first, "What, why are you staring at me, Third Child? Amazed by my look? Have a crush on me already? Huh? Perv." Shinji looked like he was just stroke by a lightning bolt, his body shivered violently once. 'Oh gods, it's her, the voice, the hair, the attitude… oh my God I think I'm gonna cry!' He fought back his tears and swallowing hard, "[So-Sorry! H-Hello, Miss Soryu. I-]" He stammered as he saw her eyes widened, looking shocked, 'Wait, he does he know my name? I haven't introduced myself yet. And he knows German? Mein Gott, this Shinji is beyond my expectations. Maybe somethings are different in this world.' "Ahem, How do you know my name, Third Child?" Shinji froze. 'Hell, I forgot about the fact that I shouldn't have known her name yet!' "Ah, that, Mi-Misato-san told me your name!" He quickly made up a lie.

"Fine, whatever. But I still gotta do this myself. I am Asuka Langley Soryu, the pilot of Unit 02, the second child. Charmed, huh?" She finished with a smirk.

Shinji took a deep breath, "[I am Ikari Shinji. It's nice to meet you.]"

"[So, I suppose you know German? Who taught you?]" Asuka couldn't help but smiled.

'You taught me.' Shinji smiled as well, 'Her smile is so beautiful, oh gods I love her so much.' "[Ah, just a little. Misato taught me. She

was your tutor in Germany, right?]"

"[Good, Third Child. Now, let's-]" Just as Asuka was about to say that they should be back with others, she was interrupted by Misato's yell across the flight deck, "Hey, you two lovebirds! Having a crush on each other already? Let's get back to the bridge!" They both blushed as red as Asuka's hair hearing those words, "Coming!" They shouted in unison; side effects of synchronization training still haunting.

While Misato and the Captain of Over the Rainbow were doing their exchange just like how he remembered, Shinji thought he needs to do something this time. 'Asuka hates me being spineless. Maybe this time I'll show her how confident I had become. Of course, it was Asuka who helped me be more confident.' He listened to the conversation carefully, trying to find a good spot to interrupt and teach the arrogant captain a good lesson.

"… Guarding a toy?" The Captain spat, twisting to stare out at the tarp covering the gigantic machine a few ships over. "This is quite a grandiose escort for the entire Pacific Fleet."

'Now, this is the time to get him to show some respect.' Just about Shinji was trying to speak, Asuka, who was standing right behind him, snorted, "Huh, how interesting. An old man who sits on the bridge every day, hadn't fought a single enemy face to face, trying to tell the pilot who risked his life every time he was saving the world from extraterrestrial threats, including your asses, more than once, that the last defense of humanity is a toy? Mein Gott, that's how you show your respect to us?"

There was a long-lasting silence, everyone seemed to be in utter shock. 'God damn Asuka, where did that come from? Was she… defending ME? Maybe she was just trying to say that she's elite, that's all. Although I have always loved her prideful attitude.' Shinji stammered, "Errr, Than-Thanks, Asuka. That, emmm, was very ni-nice of you."

"What else do you expect from me?" Asuka's expression changed from a frown to a smirk.

'This Asuka feels… weird. She's being friendly to me. This early.' Shinji thought, a small smile appearing on his face. 'Maybe this time, we can get together earlier.'

"Well, just a reminder," Misato said, snapping the folder shut and placing it under her arm. "in the case of an emergency, NERV's military authority overrides your own." Shinji's friends moved their stares from Asuka to Misato in a mixture of shock and indifference. To most of them, Misato was a cool older sister, who seemed like the least likely person to be a Director of Operations for a military group, yet here she was, speaking and acting completely different to how she usually did back at home.

"Well, I see you are as gallant as ever." The voice was very man-ish, causing the whole group to turn around, noticing a man with ponytail and a crooked smile.

"Kaji!" Asuka cried, turning quickly and raising her hand in greeting.

Misato turned, immediately gasping in terror, a scowl coming across her face.

"Mr. Kaji, how many times do I have to tell you, you must not insist to invite yourself onto the bridge." The Captain finally said something after rendered utter shock by Asuka's earlier comments.

"Oh, my apologies," Kaji replied, but sounding unapologetic, walking into the room. "I just had to come to see Asuka again after coming back onto the ship after my delivery. But it seems some other lovely people have arrived as well." Kaji gave a sly smile, directed straight at Misato, who growled in annoyance and stomped out of the room. The rest of the group left the room as well, walked down the stairs leading to lower levels. Misato soon followed them after final exchange of words with the Captain.

The whole group of people, including Kaji, were being squeezed in a small elevator. This time around, Asuka didn't choose to stand beside Kaji, but instead stood in front of Shinji, hoping to start some sort of conversation. Unfortunately, the room was so small, she couldn't help but had her body pushed against Shinji. Not that she minded, tho.

"Hey! Watch where your hands' at!" Misato shouted, her eyes staring daggers at Kaji, who had a slight frown on his face, replied, "I can't help it!"

Misato growled as the door finally opened, and the group, in their haste to get out, just to stumble each other and ended up tangling together on the floor.

With a death glare at Kaji, Misato stood and entered a small dining area. Kaji quickly stood and followed her, a small smile gracing his lips. Shinji stood and turned toward Asuka, and decided to give a hand out to her. With a small grin, she let the boy take her hand and pull herself up. Letting go of each other's hand, they both entered the dining area. Small smiles on both their faces. Two boys then entered, both sat next to Misato, who had a frown on her normally happy face. Kaji sat across from her, with a sly smile, trying to flirt with her with his foot tapping hers. Beside him, sat Asuka and Shinji, amusement on both their faces.

"So," Kaji started, his foot still tapping Misato's. "Are you seeing anyone right now?" He asked sounding almost innocent.

"I don't see why that's any of your business." Misato replied, putting her arms across her chest, trying to not look towards Kaji's face.

"I'm hurt." Kaji replied, leaning back and relaxing, and turning towards Shinji. "So, Shinji. I hear you're living with Katsuragi right now?"

"Yeah, that's right." Shinji replied, a grin appearing on his face while he remembered what's gonna happen.

"Tell me something, Shinji." Kaji said with a smile, shifting his glance over at Misato for a moment, who continued to snort and grown. "Is she still, how do I say it… Wild in bed?"

"WHAT!" Was the collective reaction from anyone who wasn't Shinji, Kaji, or Asuka. Utter shock and bafflement across the boys' faces, their hands trying to hide their faces from reality. Shinji and Asuka both couldn't help but laugh, much of a surprise to each other. Misato shouted the loudest, her face turned deep red which would make Asuka's Unit 02 feel ashamed. "Wha… Why…" She grumbled, before anger flooded her and she slammed her hands on the table, causing cups on the table to jump, her face merely inches in front of Kaji. "Just what the hell are you implying by that!?"

Kaji glanced at her, an amused look oh his face, "So, it seems that Katsuragi hasn't changed at all. Am I right, Shinji?" Misato exhaled hard and collapsed back into her seat, her head buried in her hands. "Uh, she was quite lousy at first, but becoming better every day." Shinji giggled, feeling satisfied with his joke as he saw Asuka laughed harder. "I'm more interested in how you knew my name?"

"Well, I'd ought to know you. Cuz you're famous in our business!" Kaji replied, looking at Shinji directly. "The famous Third Child! Who was able to pilot an Evangelion in combat for the first time in his life with no training at all."

Asuka had just helped herself from laughing, 'That's the spirit, Shinji. This Shinji is still the same as my Shinji, although with more sense of humor. And he's elite, too. I'm not letting you go this time, Shinji.' The young girl thought, smiling at the boy next to her.

"Thanks, I guess, but it was nothing really. It was all luck. My EVA went… What's that called? Ye, 'berserk' the first time. I didn't do anything by myself." Shinji replied, scratching the back of his head, trying to act like embarrassed.

"Well Luck is a great talent to have, Shinji." Kaji smiled, before standing abruptly. "Well, it's been nice, but I must take my leave. I

will see you all later." He exited the room, without Asuka following him this time, much to Shinji's surprise.

"Okay, see you." Shinji replied, giving the man a small wave. 'Still the old Kaji I remembered. This time, you are not dying on my watch. But why is Asuka not following him? Wasn't she just all over him?' Misato's head still in her hands, staring directly at the table. "This has to be a really bad joke, no it's a nightmare."

Just as Shinji was wondering what had caused Asuka's behavior change so suddenly, she stood up, grabbing Shinji's wrist. "You are coming with me, Third Child." She said, with a slight joyfulness in her voice, but unnoticed by others. Looking around, Shinji found a sympathetic look on Toji's face, but a small jealous look on Kensuke's. 'Oh, this time he didn't get slapped. That's why he looks jealous. Don't worry Kensuke, your dream will end pretty soon if she finds out that you will be taking those pictures of her hurr hurr hurr' Without hesitation, he followed Asuka out of the dining room.

During their ride to the cargo ship which held Unit 02, both Shinji and Asuka were immersed in their thoughts. They were both making plans of the next event which would be an Angel attack, trying to find a perfect way not only to defeat the Angel, but also warm up their relationship. Their thoughts were interrupted as the lifeboat collided with the cargo ship. Asuka climbed onto the deck, giving a hand out to Shinji, who gladly accepted.

Asuka lifted the cover slightly, showing Shinji a part of Unit 02. Looking at Unit 02 herself, she remembered that her mother's soul was trapped in it. 'Mum, you are always here for me. I thought I could never feel your love again.' Her train of thought was interrupted by Shinji, "Wow, Unit 02 looks fiery, I guess it suits you very much." Shinji said, feeling nervous as he was not sure how Asuka would think of his comment. "Well, it's not only the look," Asuka showed a wider grin as her ego was boosted, 'Old habits die hard', she thought, and continued bragging, "After all, Unit-00 and Unit-01 were created as part of the development process of an

Evangelion. Being the Prototype and the Test Type respectively. That explains why it easily synced with an untrained pilot like you is proof of that." Shinji couldn't help but feel amused at her comment, 'Still the same old Asuka, so prideful.' "But Unit-02 is different! My Evangelion was created for actual combat purposes, the world's first Evangelion Production Model! The final step for an Evangelion!" She didn't climb to the chest of her EVA this time, since she knew what's gonna happen next; standing on top of it would be dangerous with underwater explosions nearby. Just the next moment, they both felt the cargo ship started shaking, hearing distinct yet muffled sound of blast. "It's the Angel." They both murmured simultaneously, surprised at each other's choice of words. 'Why did he/she say that?' They both thought, but quickly snapped out of it, since the more important thing is to defeat the Angel.

Asuka was tempting to change to her plug suit right there, but soon she remembered that this Shinji hadn't become her boyfriend yet. So she decided to come to the same staircase she had used before, "Don't peek" was all she said to Shinji before running down to a lower level and starting to change. Shinji, on the other hand, was having no intentions to peek. 'It's not like something I haven't seen before,' He felt amused at his own thought, but the image of Asuka's body during certain nights had started to make his certain parts feel uncomfortable. 'Ah, snap out of pervy thoughts! Or the next moment she sees you like this, you'll definitely ruin her friendliness toward you! Think about non-pervy thoughts!' To his relief, the image of his naked father cooled him down immediately, but he felt like he was about to puke. "Ok, you can look," Asuka said, her right hand throwing another plug suit towards him, "put this on."

"Err, okay. I guess you want me to pilot Unit 02 with you?" Shinji asked with an interested tone.

"Of course, Third Child! I will show you my superior piloting skills!" She finished with a smirk on her face, leaving Shinji behind to change.

Once they both got into the entry plug, Asuka immediately started the activation sequence. She remembered Shinji's lack of German, but it seems like this Shinji knows decent German. So she asked, and just as the first syllabus flew out of her mouth, Shinji's voice also came out at the same time, "I wonder…" they both said, and both stopped abruptly, both felt confused. "Ladies first, Third!" After a moment of silence, Asuka said, "I wonder could you think in German?"

"Ah, I was wondering could you switch language mode to Japanese, since I don't know that much of German." Shinji replied, feeling cold sweat forming on his forehead.

"Fair enough," Asuka turned around, "Switch base language to Japanese." The EVA was successfully activated, both teens felt a warm sensation around them. "Evangelion Unit 02, move out!"

"Emergency communication from the Othello! Evangelion Unit-02 is currently in the process of activation!"

"What did you say!?" The Captain said annoyedly, just to see another Destroyer of his fleet got cut in halves. Misato happily leant hard against the window and watched intently. "Alright! Let's go, Asuka!" She said in joyfulness and excitement, a large smile on her face, directed at the Captain, who dropped cold sweat at her. Across the sea, the cover started to shift quickly, as Unit-02 started to move from its position underneath. The Captain grabbed the portable radio and shouted into it aggressively. "Abort the activation! We can't let something like that have its way in the sea!" Misato jumped in and pushed the Captain aside, "Don't listen to that moron, Asuka! Just launch the Eva! We have a job to do here!"

"What the hell do you think you're doing!?" The Captain growled, pushing Misato's head down to get her outta the way, "NERV Berlin in Germany gave us permission to bring that thing over to you, and until then it is under the strict command of this fleet. You can't just bypass that command with your own!"

Misato growled and fought back, trying to take over the radio, "Screw your authority! Who gives a damn about your procedures, this is an emergency!"

"Oh no." The First Officer said, using his binoculars directed at Unit 02, now standing over the cargo ship. "Unit-02 is still using the B-Type Equipment!" Although he disliked NERV, he did understand the technical aspects. "What!?" Both the Captain and Misato shouted, rushing back to look out at Unit-02. "Where's Kaji?"

"You mean that pony-tailed man? I think he left the ship after he exited the dining room. Saying he had to make a delivery or something." Kensuke said, "I met him on the flight deck when I was taking a walk around and taking pictures. I had a beautiful shot of the Yak-38 he was piloting!"

"Asuka! We are still using a B-Type equipment! If we fall into the Ocean, then we are done for!" Shinji said in a worried tone.

"I know!" Asuka said, "And we are going to go back to the main carrier that holds the umbilical cable! Misato!"

"Yes, Asuka," Misato's voice appeared in the comms, "Do you want me to set up external power here?"

"Ja! Wunderbar." Asuka smiled confidently, 'Last time I fell cuz the stupid elevator couldn't hold my weight. This time I'll try to avoid stepping on to it again.' Hearing nothing coming from Shinji, Asuka asked, "Shinji, have you played hopscotch?"

"Wha-" was all Shinji was able to mutter as his mouth was shut by over gravity, caused by Asuka pulling back the control yoke, thinking about the movement in her head at the same time, and Unit 02 leaped into the sky.

Landing hardly on to the flight deck of Over the Rainbow, Unit 02 stood up, pulling out it's prog knife from a shoulder pylon. The blade started vibrating at supersonic speeds. In front of them was the 6th Angel, Gaghiel. The Angel came out of the water and fluttered straight towards Unit 02. Asuka quickly made a side step, avoiding direct impact with the Angel, at the same time sliced the Angel's right side open with her prog knife. The Angel cried in pain as tons of LCL flow out of the cut. The Angel desperately wanted to go back into the ocean, but Unit 02 wouldn't let it. Grabbing firmly using one had on a side fin of the Angel, Unit 02 kept stabbing and slicing it. The angel twisted its body violently as the pain was becoming unbearable. The aircraft carrier was certainly not designed to withstand this kind of stress, and its mainframe started to give out. Both Asuka and Shinji had noticed the shaking of the body of the ship. The people inside the bridge watched in horror as they heard the sound of crushing metal and watched the flight deck starting to bend.

"Asuka! We need to get this Angel off the ship!" Shinji cried.

"I get it!" Asuka said, controlling Unit 02 to have a firm grip on the Angel, "help me pull!"

Hand on hand, they both pulled the extended control yoke as hard as they could. The eyes of Unit 02 started to glow, outputting a massive amount of power. The Angel was pulled into the water, falling down the flight deck backward, mouth open, revealing its core. Asuka saw this as a chance, she controlled Unit 02 to jump right into the Angel's mouth, and landed on the core. She pulled out her prog knife again, commencing all of her strength, and stabbed the knife into the core.

The Angel cried in pain for the last time.

Just as the Angel was about to explode, Asuka quickly put out her AT-Field, trying to shield herself and the carrier from the explosion. 'I WILL NOT LET YOU HURT THEM! Mum, will you help me?'

On the bridge of Over the Rainbow, all of the people sighed in relief as the carrier stopped shaking, and kept floating. But it's not gonna last long util being inoperational, due to the excessive damage to the main frame. Just as Misato and the boys were wondering about the status of Unit 02, they heard a massive explosion coming right underneath them. But no water columns were shooting up, instead they saw a familiar red figure flying out of the water, soon landed on the flight deck. The red giant Unit 02 used its last energy reserve to make a victorious pose.

SEELE 01: "Ikari, your possession of the embryo of Adam ensures the scenario to proceed as intended."

Gendo's facial expression hadn't changed since the start to the conference, his jaw resting on his both of his hands, fingers interlocked. "Yes, I am aware of that."

SEELE 03: "You will act as the scenario describes. Report any possible disruption to us ASAP."

SEELE 08: "How do you make sure that your son will act as planned, Ikari? From the psychological reports, he does not want to take responsibilities. He will run away when things happen to him. And it has already happened once, after the defeat of the 4th angel."

Gendo: "I am planning to use the Second Child or Rei as an anchor. After all, the Second is expendable, and Rei can be replaced."

SEELE 01: "You know what is going to happen when the scenario is threatened, Ikari."

"Well, would you look at that." Ritsuko said, glancing at the extensive damage that the ships had endured, "You guys certainly went all out."

"Why didn't we anticipate this? An Underwater Angel. We should've packed the C-Type Equipment, maybe then we would have stood a better chance." Misato said, her arms stretching out, trying to relax a bit, "not that those kids didn't do a good job, but it was close."

"What's this?" Ritsuko asked, turning her head towards Misato. "I'll take that an apology from you, for nearly destroying an entire fleet."

"Shut it, Rits." Misato replied.

"Speaking of the children," Ritsuko said, flipping open a document, "you may want to look at this."

Misato picked up the document, glancing over it, "so, emmm… wait, they achieved a combined sync ratio of 185%? How was that even possible?"

"It was because there were two minds. The sync ratio apparently stacked up. For Asuka, she reached a sync ratio of 95%. For Shinji, he managed to reach 90%." Ritsuko said, "Before this, I thought having more than one person inside an entry plug would only lower the sync ratio, due to thought noise. Just like how Shinji's friends lowered his sync ratio during the battle against the 4th Angel. But for Asuka and Shinji, this was apparently not the case. Maybe I should start to work on the dual piloting system. This battle has provided so much useful data."

"Great, but I can see there are much more in this report." Misato replied, "What is this… 'Unit 02 produced an AT-Field much stronger than anticipated.' Hell, I was wondering why the explosion didn't came out; it would have killed all of us. So it was Unit 02 that blocked the explosion." A small smile appearing on her face. 'Good job, kids. I owe you this one.'

"But Unit 02 was never supposed to produce such a strong AT-Field. And the kids' sync ratios were abnormally high, for both of them. Asuka was constantly hovering around 70s, Shinji 60s. They all achieved an abnormally high sync ratio this time. I don't know if it

was the effect of each other, or it was something else. Also, the strength of the AT-Field couldn't be explained just by the high sync ratio. It was almost like… there were two layers of AT-Fields."

"What do you mean by two layers of AT-Field? Could it be Unit 02 that produced them?" Misato asked, a feeling of dread appeared in her stomach. 'I do not have a good feeling about this.'

"I don't know. Maybe it was a glitch of the software or something, or we haven't discovered all the abilities of EVAs." Ritsuko replied, her head running at full speed. 'Is this also a part of your scenario, Gendo?'

Toji and Kensuke were standing below the escalator, waiting for their friend. Kensuke still held his somehow still intact camera, hoping to catch few shots of the exotic girl. Asuka came down the escalator at first, she saw Kensuke holding his camera, then suddenly remembered something. 'I remembered these perverts taking photos of me during school days, I saw it in Shinji's memories. Now I have a perfect excuse to prevent that from happening.' Just as she was passing by Kensuke, she grabbed his camera by surprise, and threw it to Shinji. "Gimme that, geek stooge! You realize that what you have filmed is highly classified, right? Shinji, get his camera to Misato. We will give this back to you after we are clear of intelligence leakage."

"Oh god…" Shinji had just started to come down the escalator, trying to cover himself with his arms as much as possible. He was still wearing Asuka's plugsuit.

"They match!" Toji cried out feeling remorse, thinking his friend has already fallen to the demon. Kensuke, on the other hand, was about to cry. "Y-you can't do this to me! I had the entire battle filmed!" Kensuke was starting to agree with Toji that, although Asuka has beautiful figures, she was really a demon.

'at least I don't have to worry about them taking those photos about Asuka anymore.' Sighing internally, Shinji walked past his friends, and handed the camera to a rolling-on-floor-laughing Misato. "Hahahaha, yes Shinji, hahahaha…"

'I'll never hear the end of it.' Shinji sighed heavily.

"Man, although she looks hot in her red suit, she's really a demon inside," Toji said, keeping a remorseful expression on his face, still remembering how Asuka had treated him the first day they met.

"I agree, man, she took my camera away! I had everything filmed! What a bitch!" Kensuke said, with teary eyes, "I do feel sorry for you Shinji, you have to work with her every day."

"It's so good that we'll never see her again." Sighing, both Toji and Kensuke turned around to the blackboard. Kensuke froze immediately, a deep frown on his face. Toji on the other hand, looked utterly shocked, his right index finger pointing forward.

In the front of the classroom, Asuka had just finished writing down her name, she turned around, a smirk on her face. "I'm Asuka, Asuka Langley Soryu. Charmed, Huh?"

Always, Heart, Together

AN: I do not own Evangelion. Also keep expecting this upload frequency for a while. Things are gonna change, but overall it'll stick to the canon for now. More daily life scenes added. It seems like things for 3.0+1.0 are not that bad actually. Just wait. This chapter will be the last chapter that's canon-like. In the next chapter, bad things will happen. Stay tuned. Leave a Review!

[ ] lines spoken in German

' ' character's thoughts

" " dialogues

Chapter 4: Always, Heart, Together

"Guys, ya know the new transfer student from Germany? She's hot!"

"Yeah! Right! And she's only 13!"

"Bull shit! She's curvier than some of the senior hotties!"

"I guess she came here to have a fresh start, after some hard break-ups in Germany?"

"I'm totally gonna ask her out."

"Shut up, you won't have a chance."

"Hey, what do you mean?! Girls would fight to get to have a lunch with me!"

"No offense, but ya know about the tallest guy in basketball team called Takuma? Yesterday he was already trying to grope a feel on her, and guess what? She freaking broke his fingers! Man I do feel sorry for him, since he'd probably be out of the rollout for a while."

"Man you can't be serious!"

"Why would I lie? Her movement was fast as hell! Everyone who was in the hallway saw it! She pinned him on the floor in a blink of an eye!"

"Holy shit man, isn't Takuma 6 feet tall or something? That girl looks barely 5 feet and a half!"

"You wouldn't believe it unless you see it! I wouldn't be surprised if she was trained with martial arts or something! Oh shit, here she comes!"

The boys' chatters stopped as soon as they saw Asuka walked into the school gate, keeping the smirk on her face. She looked around, finding Shinji not far away, pacing slowly. She grinned wider. "Hello Shinji! Guten Morgen!"

"Guten Morgen Asuka!" Shinji greeted back, turning back and smiling, "[How do you think about school?]"

Walking in front of Shinji, Asuka flicked his forehead lightly, "[School was… fine I guess. Anyways, I have already graduated from college. If it's not for socializing purposes I wouldn't be here!]"

"[You've already graduated college? Wow, that's… impressive.]" Shinji said, trying to sound actually impressed, and was happy to see Asuka's smile grew wider, 'yes, boost her ego like that!'

"[I've already got my master's degree at the University of Berlin. Heh, those college students looked at me like I'm a freak.]" Asuka said, shaking her head to try to wipe out certain unpleasant memories. 'No one talked to me. No one cared about me. Maybe they were scared? Pff, that was the past now.'

"That's good to hear-err, no! That's not what I meant." Shinji's heart dropped when he saw Asuka's eyes twitched, "I-I-I was trying to say, emmm, you are brilliant!"

"What else do you expect from me, Third Child? After all, I'm the great Asuka Langley Soryu." Asuka kept her cool composure, "So, where's the First Child, anyway?" Behind them, there were flocks of students. Most of the male students were showing jealous looks on their faces. They were envied that the socially-awkward, scrawny kid could hold a decent conversation with the redhead German. Some of the females showed remorseful looks since they felt threatened that this new transfer student might take their cute and Elite-EVA-pilot away.

"You mean Ayanami? She's right there. The girl with blue hair." Shinji replied, hoping things can work out better this time, "She's just… untalkative, don't get offended if she seems to ignore you. She doesn't really talk to anyone."

'Of course she doesn't; she's like an emotionless doll.' Asuka sighed internally, 'But I'll try to be nicer to her this time. After all, I have to thank that god-like Ayanami for sending me back here.' Walking down the stairs, Asuka didn't choose to stand atop Ayanami this time. Instead, she sat down next to her.

"So, Hello, First Child! I'm Asuka, Asuka Langley Soryu. Let's be friends!" Asuka said, keeping a smile.

"Why?" Rei replied, her eyes still focused on the book.

"Because… because we are both pilots! Pilots look after each other in battles, right? Since I am the best pilot here, it's my duty to look after you and Baka-Shinji when we are fighting against the Angels."

Asuka's words caused an explosive chattering around them.

"So she's an Eva pilot! No wonder she beat Takuma like flipping a coin!"

"What does this girl not do? Man, I'm definitely asking her out"

…

Ayanami blinked, 'Friends… pilots… look after each other? I remembered what Ikari-kun did to me. I felt… taken care of. It was not an unpleasant feeling. So, does this mean I am a friend to both Ikari-kun and Soryu-san?' "Yes, Soryu-san. I think we can be friends."

Asuka blinked. She never thought Ayanami would respond this way. Not that she minded, tho. "Great!"

'Well, that went better than I anticipated.' Shinji smiled, 'But I remembered that Israfel is about to attack very soon. I'd better get ready.' Just at this moment, all three pilots felt their phones vibrating and ringing. 'It's Israfel,' Asuka and Shinji both thought, 'What am I going to do this time?'

"Shinji, you will be providing long-range fire support for Asuka! Asuka, you will engage the target in close quarters combat!"

"Hai!" They both said in unison, much to each other's surprise. 'These synchronized responses are getting on my nerves… But I haven't done the synchronization training this time, yet. How could he/she be so synced with me?' They both thought, Shinji prepared his rifle and aimed, and Asuka held on to her prog spear, "Watch carefully, Third! I will show you what's called superior pilot skills!" 'Great, she's gonna screw it up again just like how I remembered,' Shinji sighed, "I'm ready whenever you are!"

"Great! Now, three, two, one!" Asuka leaped into the air, and Shinji immediately started shooting, trying to distract the Angel. After a feel jumps, Asuka finally got close enough to the target, and Shinji ceased firing just before Asuka was in his line of fire. "YEEEEEEYYYAAAAAAHHH!" Asuka jumped high above the ground and made a battle cry, holding her prog spear, and slashed down onto the Angel. The angel made no resistance whatsoever and was cut in half promptly.

"Great work, Asuka!" Misato exclaimed in the comms, feeling proud of the girl.

'Now it's time to get away!' Asuka thought, and she jumped back hundreds of meters away from the Angel. 'Wow, this time she actually managed to escape the danger instead of bragging about how great she was,' Shinji felt surprised, 'but it's still gonna be nearly impossible for us to win against Israfel without proper synchronization training.' Shinji stood there, watching as the Angel's body started to twitch.

"The Angel's still alive!" Aoba yelled, "Pattern blue is not eliminated!" Everyone on the command deck watched in disbelieve as the Angel regenerated and became two separate bodies. "Asuka, Shinji! The Angel's still alive! Be careful, cuz we don't know it-their abilities yet! Try not to make the Angel became three or more! Rits, what is MAGI telling us?" Misato shouted, and Ritsuko replied, "The MAGI is still processing the information and analyzing the samples! This is nothing like what we have encountered before! We need Asuka and Shinji to hold them off longer!"

"Shinji, Asuka, just hold off the Angel for a little longer! We don't know what they are capable of!"

"Hai!" They both responded in unison again. Shinji dropped his rifle, pulled out his prog knife. 'The two parts of the Angel always act simultaneously, and they do not get away from each other. I can't fight both of them along. It took a week of synchronization training for me and Asuka to defeat it. I don't know how can we deal with them now. Maybe I could just ask Misato to drop an N2 mine, just like last time.' Holding off the Angels' attacks side by side with Asuka, Shinji thought about luring the Angel away from the land as far as possible and request an N2 strike.

"Asuka, I need you to work with me to get them away from the land!" Asuka, on the other hand, was thinking about the same thing, 'Maybe it is a good idea to just drop an N2 mine on them.' "Good idea, Third! Now let's get to work!" Both EVAs jumped high into the

sky, landing right behind the Angel. The Angel turned around and jumped towards the EVA units, the two parts acted in unison. Both EVA units raised their arms to block the attack but were sent flying backward. Although it looked messy, they had achieved their goal. "Misato, drop an N2 mine! We can't hold them much longer!" Shinji shouted into the comms. On the command deck, Misato heard the request, think about it with a frown on her face.

'Maybe the kids have the point. We could use the time to create a plan. But the destruction of the landscape would cause me a tremendous amount of paperwork.' "Rits, what does MAGI suggest?"

"The MAGI has achieved a conclusion: to hold off the Angel as long as possible. Thus, it accepted the proposal of an N2 strike." Ritsuko said, her fingers still typing furiously on her PC.

"Great. Now, Asuka, Shinji! Get out of there! We are about to launch an N2 strike!"

"At 11:10 AM, both EVA units had retreated, 1 minute later, the UN forces attacked the target by dropping an N2 mine." Maya continued, eyes still focusing on the computer.

"You all know what this means, don't you?" Fuyutsuki said, "We'll have to completely redraw the map. Devise a new strategy."

"The N2 mine successfully succeeded in burning off 28% of the Angel's structural substance."

Maya said as the feed showed the Angel's currently dormant form.

"So, I guess they are not dead?" Asuka asked, already knowing the answer.

"No," Gendo said, his voice never had any tone in it, "It has simply immobilized them. A second attack will only take a matter of time."

"Well," Kaji said, twisting around slightly in his seat, "Look on the bright side, at least we have some time to regroup, you really can't ask for any more than that."

"You two." Shinji and Asuka turned around to follow the voice, staring at the Commander of NERV, who was looking frustrated. "What do you think your job here at NERV is?"

"To defeat the Angels." Asuka and Shinji both said, and turned their look to each other in surprise. 'This is really getting on my nerves,' Shinji thought, 'are we this synchronized even before the training? Not that I minded though.'

As for Asuka, she thought about something else, 'Well this is certainly interesting. This Shinji is much more active. Maybe he would respond to my hints this time.'

Gendo, satisfied with the answer, turned and stalked out of the room, the First Child followed the Commander obediently.

"You two will work together, to defeat the Angel." Fuyutsuki said, leaving the room as well. As soon as the Sub-Commander was gone, the lights in the room returned, the main screen turning off. Asuka turned away from Shinji, "Well then Third Child, it seems like we have a lot of team building to do. Don't drag me back, understand?"

Shinji chuckled, 'Well, we'll see about that.' Thinking about how he would embarrass Asuka on the dancing mat since he had done it before, he couldn't help but felt amused, "Sure thing, Asuka."

Misato had just walked out of her office, still feeling a sense of dread about the mountain of paperwork presented on the table. She looked at the plan that Kaji gave her and sneezed. 'Why am I still thinking about this guy? It's so frustrating.' A familiar voice snapped her out of thought. "Hello, Misato! I wonder where will I be living from now on?" Asuka asked in a questioning tone, having a smirk on her face.

"Well, hadn't Kaji tell you? You will be living with me now. All of your stuff will be transported to our apartment shortly." Misato replied, her face lightens up a bit.

"Well, sounds good to me," Asuka replied, "although I would prefer to live with Kaji!"

Misato snorted, "I don't know what you see in that stupid jerk! He's such a pig!"

"Don't say that! Kaji's a really mannered gentleman! Anyway, I actually don't want all of my stuff to be put in your apartment. They are too much, and I've already known that you Japanese don't live in large houses." Asuka smiled, "take me to the storage, I will choose which boxes that I like to keep!"

Shinji walked into the school gate, wondering why he was still requested to finish the school day. As soon as he entered the classroom, he was surrounded by girls with promising looks.

"Shinji-kun, what was fighting the Angel like? Was that scary?"

"Shinji-kun, you have saved the city again! You are such a hero!"

"Would you have lunch with me tomorrow, Shinji-kun? I've been looking forward to it for weeks!"

"Just keep dreaming! Shinji-kun would never eat lunch with you!"

…

Shinji felt the world was spinning around him - he had rarely been in the center of attention, much to his dislike. He shot a pleading look to Hikari, who immediately understood his mind and stood up, shouting, "OKAY! ENOUGH! EVERYBODY GO BACK INTO YOUR SEAT!" Just as she finished, the bell rang and Sensei came in.

"Rise! Bow! Sit!" Hikari said after everyone came back to their seats.

Shinji opened his laptop and entered a chat room.

Chatroom 03: Guests: Hikari.H, LebronJames, EVAUnit01, Shinji.I

Shinji.I: Thanks, Horaki-san.

Hikari.H: No problem, Shinji-kun. If you feel uncomfortable with all the girls, I can tell them to stop harassing you.

Shinji.I: I'd appreciate that.

LebronJames: Wassup, Shin-man! Tell me, how did the fight go?

Shinji.I: It didn't go well…

Hikari.H: What? But we are back here, that means the Angel was defeated, right?

Shinji.I: well, you could say that for now, since it's dormant right now.

EVAUnit01: God damn Shinji, I knew it was a big fight! I saw the blast! It was huge!

Shinji.I: WHAT!? You went out again? Do you know how dangerous it was? That N2 blast could have burnt your eyes permanently!

EVAUnit01: relax, boy. I was prepared with special visors.

Shinji.I: You should really restrain yourself in the shelter the next time.

Hikari.H: By the way, Shinji-kun, what happened to Soryu-san? Shouldn't she come back with you? OMG, was she hurt?

Shinji.I: No, don't worry, she's perfectly fine. No one was hurt. I think she might be packing up her stuff right now…

Shinji entered his apartment, fully expecting to see loads of boxes. However, the room was relatively empty, much to his surprise. Walking into the dining area, he was again surprised to see nothing unusual there. A chill ran down his spine. 'Oh no no no no no no no… why aren't Asuka's things here? Isn't she's going to live with me? no No NO!' Breathing heavily and nervously, Shinji walked towards the bedroom that would have been Asuka's, and stopped in front of the door, hearing rustling sounds coming out of the room. Slowly, he knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" Hearing a familiar voice came behind the door, Shinji felt a big weight had been lifted from his heart. "Um, Asuka, is that you? Wha… what are you doing in my room?"

"Anta Baka?" Asuka slid the door open, her arms holding a neatly packaged blanket with Shinji's stuff in it, "I will be living here with Misato from now on! It's natural that she would want to live with a superior pilot! Don't you think?" Asuka handed the blanket to Shinji, "Here, take your stuff. Gah, you don't really possess many things, do you? I was fully expecting some romantic magazines…"

Shinji blushed, "Hey! What is that supposed to mean?" He took a deep breath, trying to calm down, "Wait, does this mean that I'm kicked out?" 'Well, I knew the answer already, but it would be fun to talk with her a bit.'

"Of course!" Asuka smirked, "What, are you having pervy thoughts about living with two hot young women?"

"It's not that!" Shinji quickly rebutted, trying hard to hide his blush caused by the sight of Asuka's long, long legs which triggered some pleasant memories, "It's just that I don't want to live with my father, that's all!"

"How about Ayanami? I'm sure she's pretty hot as well…" Asuka teased, "I saw the way you've looked at her sometimes…"

'It's because she's my half-sister' Shinji thought, 'but I couldn't let you know now.' "Ah, errr, wait, you were looking at me? Well, I thought you were mannered enough to not peek at me!"

Asuka choked by her saliva and coughing, 'Whoa, Shinji is pushing back? How interesting!' "Cough cough… Don't -cough - get wrong - cough - wrong ideas, Third Child!" Asuka said, swallowing hard to free herself from choking, "You are my fellow pilot, it was my duty to keep an eye on you!"

"Ahem! Having enough marital quarrels? Let's get to work!" Misato suddenly appeared behind them, "and no, Shinji is not leaving. He will be living here with us!"

"What?!" Asuka cried, trying to sound angry, although she was feeling happy, "Girls and boys are not supposed to live under the same roof after the age of seven!" She intentionally left out the 'I'm not living with this pervert' part.

"Well, Shinji, Asuka!" Misato shouted, bringing the kids to silence as they turned to face her, "From now on you two will not just live together. You will eat together, sleep together, train together…" Before letting either one of them interrupt, she bent over and came nearly nose length away from both of their faces. "And by the way," Her tone was now soft and mild, "That's an order."

After briefing the pilots about the plan, Misato gave them time to change their outfits, much to Shinji and Asuka's dismay. After Asuka had done changing, she came out of her room, just to find Shinji had already stood aside Misato. Upon seeing each other, both teens stood where they were and started to bite hard their lips. Misato saw what's coming, and decided to add some drama, "Well would you look at this," an evil grin appeared on her face, "people synchronize with each other starting from the outside."

Shinji couldn't help but started giggling. Seeing this, Asuka couldn't hold it longer. The giggling soon became rolling-on-floor laughs.

Shinji's left hand was pressing down his stomach, right hand pointing at Asuka, his whole body vibrating. Asuka, on the other hand, was laughing so hard that she began to experience oxygen deprivation. Looking at this adorable scene, Misato thought, 'these kids are so cute when they are like this. Maybe I should push them together or something. They are probably the only ones that could possibly understand each other.'

Later that evening, Shinji went to the grocery store and bought some ingredients for German food. 'Asuka hated Japanese food, at least during the period when she just arrived.' Shinji decided to make some Schnitzel with some scrambled eggs. He was determined to impress Asuka for her first dinner at their apartment with his cooking. He felt like singing and dancing. So he did.

"~fly me to the moon~~hmmm~hmmm~in other words, I lov WHOA!" Shinji had just opened the door, and his face almost crashed into Misato's chest.

"What's so happy about, Shin-chan?" Misato said in a teasing tone, "you love what? I know Asuka-chan is attractive and all that…" She finished with a knowing look and a raise of eyebrows.

'oh shit shit shit shit shit' Although Shinji was quite used to Misato's teasing, the lack of practice due to him and Asuka actually went together had rendered him speechless and blushing furiously this time. "I… I was just singing! Nothing that I love! Oh wait, that doesn't sound like what I meant… of course I errr, I care about you, Misato-san! You are, emmm, like a mo-mother to me…" He almost lost his composure when he remembered how Misato had died trying to get him into Unit01.

Misato was in shock. She totally didn't expect this. 'This kid's got such a good heart,' she thought, 'I don't think I deserve to be called a mother by you, Shinji. At least not yet.' "Shinji, that was very kind of you. Thanks."

Asuka was watching TV after Misato gave them the music that they need to remember. She was wearing a casual yellow t-shirt and blue short shorts. She then smelled something familiar. 'It smells like Baka-Shinji is cooking Schnitzer. But how does this Shinji know that I like it? Maybe he just thinks that I'm from German so I must like German food.' Satisfied with the reasoning, she stood up and walked towards her room. She wanted to take a shower before dinner.

Asuka entered the bathroom, took off her clothes, and lied in the bathtub filled with hot water. She felt so comfortable just lying there. She then wanted to get some Shampoo and wash her hair, so she just reached out her hand to the position where she remembered the Shampoo should be, just to grab on something very hairy and soft.

"WARK!" peck.

"OUCH!" Asuka cried, immediately withdrew her arm, and found a red mark on her hand. "[Stupid Penguin!]" Asuka cursed in German and stood up. She had to find the shampoo after all. Just as she was about to step out of the bathtub, she heard the door of the bathroom slide open, Shinji's concerned voice came after-

"Asuka are you alrig-AHHHH!" Shinji immediately closed the door, blushing furiously. 'Although it's not something I haven't seen yet, but it's still embarrassing to her! I hope she doesn't hate me for this!' "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to-"

Asuka was also blushing in the bathroom. Everything happened so fast she wasn't able to process all the information. After a few seconds, as the realization finally came down to her, the whole building started to shake like an earthquake.

"BAKA-SHINJI!"

The next morning, Misato woke up the kids at precisely 6 am. It was supposed to be the first day of their actual dancing session. The kids got up and dressed, still embarrassed to look at each other in the

eyes. Misato quickly set up the dancing mat. After eating breakfast, she instructed the children on how to use the mat.

"… and that's how you get sync scores. Remember, both of you need to get 100 percent to have a chance to defeat the Angel. Now let's try this. Asuka, go to the left mat. Shinji, you'll have the right. Okay. Both of you, put on your headset. Okay. Ready? Three, two, one!"

As the familiar rhythm sounded, they both started dancing under reflex and muscle memory. Both of them weren't expecting anything from the first try. Asuka was totally indifferent. Shinji, on the other hand, was expecting to embarrass Asuka. He thought this Asuka hadn't done this before, so he had an unfair advantage. However, both of them soon found themselves wrong.

'How is this possible? Why are we so perfectly in sync with each other? She/He shouldn't have done anything like this before!' After the final beat, the scoreboard showed a 95% sync score.

Misato didn't know what to say. She hadn't seen anyone act so perfectly in sync with another before. Their movements were impeccable and in sync. It was almost like… they were trained to do this. No. They were born to do this.

The pilots looked at each other, also in utter disbelieve. The silence lasted about ten seconds, before Misato finally spoke up, "Well, that was… quite impressive. Keep up the work. I don't think you guys will need much effort to accomplish our goal, considering this is your first time doing it."

Asuka put up her composure the next, "Well, what do you expect from the Great Asuka Langley Soryu? I bet if it was not Baka Shinji there who performed several wrong steps, we could have managed 100 percent already!"

Shinji chuckled. For sure he totally hadn't expected this. But he told himself that in his world, it was only because Asuka was the one

constantly breaking the sync by moving too fast. Satisfied with his explanation, he said, "Well Asuka, I..emm, maybe you should slow down a bit? It will be easier for me to catch up."

Asuka grinned, feeling her ego boosted. "Sure thing, Third Child. Just don't make any stupid mistakes!"

It was three days after they had started their sync training. Their friends were starting to worry about them.

"Hey Ken, haven't seen Shin-man and the Red Devil for three days. What do ya think theyr doin'?" Toji asked, sitting on his desk, his eyes looking at the empty seat of Shinji, legs swinging in the air.

"I dont know man, theyve must be doing some NERV business. Imean, they are both pilots, after all." Kensuke said, still mad about how his camera was taken by the Red Devil.

"I say we go check on him today after school. Maybe the demon had put a spell on him or something. I need to make sure hes safe!"

"Okay man, Ill come with ya."

Hikari was worried about Asuka. Not only about the fact that she hadn't shown up in the school for three days but also the schoolwork she's missing was building up. For sure that Asuka had told her about how she had already graduated college and attending middle school just to socialize, but as the class rep she had to maintain a sense of formality. So she decided to deliver Asuka's schoolwork to her apartment in person.

The bell rang, and she immediately packed up her stuff and began walking towards the address that Asuka had given her. She reached the apartment building, walked inside the elevator, pressed the floor, and waited. The door opened, she exited the elevator, just to find the other two stooges were already standing in the hallway.

"Hello, Toji. Hello, Kensuke." She greeted.

"Hi, class rep./Hell, Horaki-san." The stooges greeted back, "Whatcha doin here, class rep? What wind had blown you here?" Toji asked.

Hikari smiled, "Im here to deliver the school work Soryu-san was missing. What about you guys?"

Toji tried to hide his blush, "We are here to check on Shin-man. Missed three days of school. We are worried about him."

They started walking towards the Katsuragi residence, just to find them stopped in front of the same door.

"Why had you stopped, class rep? I thought u were visiting the Red Devil." Toji asked, looking confused.

"Well, this is the address Soryu-san gave me. I was wondering the same thing." Hikari said, looking more confused.

"This is definitely the apartment Shinji lives in, we came here last time!" Kensuke added, sounding very confused. Suddenly, a shocking realization came down on them.

"you don't mean…" Hikari said in a horrified tone.

"You can't be serious…" Toji swallowed hard, "well, better ring the bell first…"

All three of them reached out their index fingers and pressed on the doorbell.

"Coming!" Was the voice came behind the door. A few seconds later, the door hissed open.

Just to show Asuka leaning on Shinji's back, her head peeking out on top of Shinji's, and they were wearing the exposing and suggesting outfit.

Both Toji and Kensuke couldn't believe what they saw, trying to use their arms to hide their faces. They backed off a step, remorse and disbelieve were their expression.

"You… betrayed us…" Kensuke said, feeling disgusted.

"Disgusting…" Toji said, still not blinking, "Are you… and her…"

"No!" They both shouted in unison, face reddened, "It's not like that!"

Hikari buried her face in her hands, shaking her head violently. "Then what is it like?"

"Misato said people know each other starting from the outside! This is our training!" In sync. "We have to train together, eat together, sleep…" They both stopped at the exact same word, realizing what that word would imply.

Hikari, upon hearing that word, turned from embarrassment to rage. "You… you… this is so dirty! Sleeping together? Oh My GOD! You are living in SIN!

"What is it, kids?" Misato arrived, asking.

"Could you please explain what's going on here?" Hikari requested, her face blushing furiously.

Ten minutes later, after a detailed explanation, the classmates laughed in relief. "So that's why they are like this… I wonder how well they are doing?" Hikari said, feeling sorry for jumping to a conclusion too quickly.

"Take a look by yourself." Misato emptied another can.

After watching their dance for a while, the boys and the class rep were amazed by the total synchronization of Asuka and Shinji's movements.

DU! The music stopped, and the scoreboard showing a 100 percent sync score.

"Wow, that was great! Comon Shinji, get us something to drink." Asuka was breathing heavily, wiping out sweat off her forehead.

"Jawohl Mein führer" Shinji mocked, quickly running away from some potential unpleasant physical contact.

"Hmpf, I'll deal with u later, Third Child!" Asuka shouted, but grinning a little, "Baka."

"Well, it seems like they are doing a pretty decent job." Hikari smiled, "How much training did it take to get them to this level?"

"Well, not much, since they achieved a 95 percent on their first try," Misato replied plainly.

"Miss Misato, may I try it with Toji?" Kensuke said with a pleading eye, apparently, he was interested in everything that's EVA related.

"Emmm, since our pilots are doing a great job, I think yeah, I can let you try it." Misato agreed, and Kensuke just jumped out of his seat, "COOL! Thank you, Captain! Comon, Toji! We gotta try what the pilots do!" 'Maybe If I perform well on this thing, NERV may actually consider me as a potential pilot.' Toji reluctantly stood up, "Aye, aye, don't know why ya so obsessed with these."

The boys got onto their respective mats, put on the headsets, and waited for the music to start. "Okay guys, three, two, one!"

"DU! Di, Di, Di, DU! Di, DU! DU! Buzzzzz-" Within 8 steps, the music stopped and a big "ERROR" appeared on the scoreboard.

"Hehehehe" Hikari giggled, "you two can't even make it to the end of prelude!"

"This is so stupid!" Toji exclaimed, "I'm not doing this anymore!"

"Ye, I agree this is hard," Kensuke said, his voice down. Maybe it is not easy to be an EVA pilot after all.

Asuka watched the whole scene, a prideful expression on her face, "Well, accept the reality, stooges. It's not like anyone can just become an EVA pilot without effort or talent! And obviously, while Shinji has the talent…" She intentionally cut off her sentence, waiting for someone to continue.

"Your parents bribed NERV?" Toji mocked.

"You're the Commander's pet?" Kensuke followed.

Asuka's face quickly became clouded, and shot a death glare to Toji and Kensuke, "Meh, I should have known that I could expect NOTHING from those monkey heads of yours!"

Just as a big fight was about to start, Shinji came back from the kitchen swiftly with empty hands and realized that the powder keg was about to explode. He quickly walked in front of Asuka, blocking her sight to the stooges, "Asuka, there's no more drinks in the fridge except Misato's beers!"

Asuka calmed down a bit, and saw this as a perfect excuse to escape from the fight, "Well then, Shinji, come with me! We are going to buy some drinks from the stores." She grabbed Shinji's wrist and dragged him along the way. Shinji shot an irritated glare to Toji and Kensuke, his eyes saying "Look at what u guys got me into!" Toji and Kensuke were looking at Shinji with sympathetic eyes but made it clear that there was nothing they could do to help him.

To Shinji's surprise, Asuka was not being very hostile to him even though she was in a bad mood. In the grocery store, Asuka picked up some drinks and snacks that she liked, and Shinji actively paid for them. They don't really have any other places to spend their salary. On their way back, they found the bench, and they both sat on it. There was a comfortable silence between them as they watched the

sunset, drank the sodas, and ate the snacks. Asuka spoke up the first after she finished her snack, "Shinji, tell me, why would you pilot the EVA?"

Shinji was taken aback by the sudden question, "Errr, I thought that I wanted to pilot the EVA for my father's attention. He left me alone 10 years ago, and disappeared from my life. I couldn't understand why he just left me. So maybe I am piloting the EVA so he could pay more attention to me. But now, I think I want to pilot the EVA for the others. You know, to protect the people that you care."

Asuka thought about his response for a while, 'Pretty close to the Shinji in my world.' Then she said, "Well, for me I piloted EVA for other's praise. Because I was afraid that no one would want me, no one would look at me if I was not the best." 'Now tho, I know that whatever happens, you will look at me.' Asuka smiled faintly, "But now I think I pilot EVA for myself. I want me to be able to sincerely praise myself." 'I don't care about how others think about me anymore since I know you wouldn't leave me alone. And that's enough for me.'

'Wow, Asuka had grown up a bit, almost to the same level as the Asuka in my world,' Shinji thought, surprised. They finished their snacks and headed back to the apartment.

It was the last night before the battle. After the final practice with a 100 percent score, Asuka and Shinji went to do their respective things. Asuka went to take a shower, and Shinji sat on his futon reading manga and listening to his SDAT. 'If she says something about the wall of Jericho again, I have to take action this time,' Shinji thought nervously, 'maybe I could just ask her what she needs, that's all.'

Asuka came out of the shower, her body wrapped in a large white towel. "So, Misato isn't gonna be here tonight?" She asked in a teasing tone.

"Ah, yes" Shinji replied, not really paying much attention since he was immersed in his own thoughts.

"Then, there will only be two of us here tonight!" Asuka walked into the living room, picked up her futon, and put it down in her bedroom. 'Maybe this time Shinji would actually get my hints,' She thought. "This is the impenetrable wall of Jericho," Asuka half-intentionally exposed her chest by leaning forward, her tone was ever so slightly hostile, "Cross it, you die. Do you understand?"

"Ah, yeah, sure" Shinji replied, his eyes tho couldn't help but peeking at Asuka's body.

Asuka huffed and shut the door close. Shinji stood up, got himself a drink from the fridge, and waited for several minutes. Just as Asuka was about to give up and go to sleep, Shinji got up and knocked on Asuka's door.

"What is it, Third Child?" Asuka said behind the door, trying to sound hostile, "I thought I told you this is the impenetrable wall of Jericho…"

"And the wall… fell, Asuka," Shinji said in a plain tone, trying hard to hide his nervousness, "I thought you want me to come in."

Asuka was more than happy to hear that. "Well, yes. I did want you to come in. It seems like you are not that dense." Shinji slid the door open, finding Asuka sitting on her futon. "I just want to talk to you. Come and sit here, Third."

"Shinji, I remember you said that you pilot the EVA to protect people you care about," Asuka said, her eyes looking straight forward, "Who in this world falls into that category?"

Shinji blinked; he had never expected that Asuka would ask such a question. From his intuition he gained by staying with Asuka in his world, he felt like there were something more hidden behind the question. But he was never good at dealing with girls. "Well, I care

about a lot of people. People who work at NERV, my classmates, my friends, Misato-san, Rei, and… you." He said the last word in almost a whisper.

"Why do you care about me?" Asuka raised her volume, "It's not like we are that acquainted with each other. I mean, it's only been like 10 days since we met. And I was sometimes abusive to you. Why *should* you care?"

"Errr…" Shinji couldn't answer this question. For sure he cared about Asuka, but that was largely from his care about the Asuka in his world. Although he knew this Asuka is not much different than that Asuka, and he only wanted to make Asuka happy, he couldn't just say "I'm from the future, and I fell in love with you", at least not yet. Instead, he said, "I care about you because I kinda admire you. Before you came here, no one was pushing me so hard. People tend to ignore me, no matter what I did. I always do what other people tell me to do, and they still don't care about me. They…"

Asuka shut him off, "Stop it. That's exactly why people ignore you!" Shinji was taken aback by her statement, "Wha-Why?"

"Have you ever cared about the doormat you step on every day?" Asuka turned her gaze to Shinji, who was showing an absolutely astonished expression.

"I-I have never thought about it this way." Shinji shook his head, "I guess you are right, Asuka. And maybe this is why I… care about you. You don't ignore me as others do."

Asuka, somewhat satisfied with his explanation, laid down on her futon. "Sure. Whatever. Don't expect me to stop pushing you, tho. I don't want a spineless wimp to be my wingman! Now go back to sleep!"

"Jawohl Mein Lieber" Shinji quickly ran away from Asuka.

"What did you say?" As the realization came down on her, her face turned deep red. "BAKA-SHINJI! DIE!"

The battle proceeded as expected. After both EVAs executed a simultaneous kick on the Angel's cores, the cores cracked and gave out. The EVAs were engulfed by a giant explosion.

"We did it!" Misato joyously exclaimed, jumping up and down, which Kaji took full advantage of, pulling her close and planted a kiss on her cheek.

Misato scoffed, pulling away with remorseful looks, "Unit 01, Unit 02, do you copy?" She spoke into the microphone.

"Roger." Both Asuka and Shinji replied simultaneously.

Misato looked up at the video feed to see that both of their EVA Units were standing triumphantly atop the mountain outside of the city, side by side.

"Good job you two. We'll be sending a retrieval team to pick you up shortly. You two can relax a bit for now."

"You got it." Asuka said as she stretched her arm and yawned, "Oh, and you were not bad out there, Shinji."

Shinji grinned. "Thanks. You fought well, too, Asuka." Asuka also smiled, closing her eyes.

Back at NERV Headquarters, Fuyutsuki lowered his head and closed his eyes, a grin spread on his face. "Well, I'll be damned. They did it."

A/N Whoa! I had so much fun writing this chapter. WAFF content will eventually come. Shinji will go to the swimsuit shopping with Asuka. Things will change when fighting Sandalphon.

Loss

AN: Hi guys, here's another chapter. I want to thank all people who faved followed or reviewed. While the ending of ROE is still not clear, I am still writing. This chapter includes more daily life scenes and sandalphon. And some Rei scenes. Prepare for divergence from canon.

Also, thanks to NoliVerga who pointed out the wrong height of Asuka. tbh, I was not familiar with feet and all that. For clarification: Asuka is 157cm tall.

I do not own Eva.

' ' character's thoughts

" " dialogues

Chapter 5: Loss

The day both pilots returned to the school went unexpectedly. As soon as Asuka and Shinji entered the classroom, they were greeted by a round of applause and cheers. Asuka was clearly flattered by the praise, showing a wide grin on her face. Shinji, on the other hand, just followed Asuka closely, trying to hide his face behind her. He was never used to be in the center of attention.

They soon sat in their respective seat, and the Sensei continued about the economy after the second impact, eventually drifted into how great life was before the second impact, and how he was able to do all those amazing activities in leisure time. The students soon calmed down and opened their laptops to chat with friends.

Shinji looked around, finding Rei was absent. 'weird,' he thought, 'Last time Rei was here when we were back. I wonder where did she go this time?' He made a decision to check on her half-sister after school. The day went by. As soon as the bell rang, he grabbed his

schoolbag, told Asuka about his destination, and hurried out the door.

Asuka was some kind of jealous although she knew Shinji was not the kind of guy who would have romantic relationships with two girls at once. But she was still worried about whether this Shinji will actually come together with her. Sighing internally, she diverted her course and headed in the direction where Shinji went.

Shinji came in front of the door of Rei's apartment, seeing the mailbox still full. Sighing, he knocked on the door. "Ayanami? Are you here? May I come in?"

"Yes." was all he got.

Without hesitation, he pushed the door open. To his relief, he found Ayanami just sitting on the chair, reading. Noticing his presence, Rei raised her head, her crimson eyes looking at Shinji.

"Rei, I was just wondering why u were absent from school. You know I'm ur… friend, so I care about u, and I wanted to check on u."

"I am in perfect health condition. I am not having any mental disorder." Rei replied, her facial expression never changing a little.

Shinji was taken aback by the flat, dead, and dry tone Rei used. Of course she was kinda always like this, but after Ramiel she should be more open and emotional to others. Shinji felt something was not right. Just as he was thinking, he heard Asuka's voice calling him.

"Shinji! Are you here?"

'I never thought that this Asuka cares about me so much that she actually followed me here,' Shinji thought, surprised. He swiftly walked out, finding Asuka standing not far away. "Asuka! Im here!" He started waving his hand as he saw Asuka turned her head towards his direction.

Asuka walked towards Shinji, mumbling, a disgusted look on her face. "Shinji, what is this place? Is this where wonder girl lives? I won't keep a sick dog here! This place is a dump!" Asuka said in a remorseful tone.

"Well, u have my father to blame on this…" Shinji said in a low voice, suddenly feeling guilty about how he hadn't done anything to help improve his sister's living condition.

"Whatever. What are u doing here, anyway? Having a little Private meeting with wonder girl?" She said in a teasing tone.

"N-No, Asuka! Im… just worried about her, since she was absent. I… there's nothing between us!" Shinji was thinking about whether he should tell Asuka the truth about Rei.

"Yeah, sure, I know there is nothing between u! No air gap, no covers, nothing but sweet!" Asuka was actually feeling somewhat angry, seeing how Shinji was actually blushing.

Shinji was also getting irritated, obviously by Asuka's paranoia. 'It's not like Asuka will tell NERV about I know Rei's my sister or something. Fuck it! Im not running away this time.' "Asuka, please! You are getting this all wrong!"

"Yeah, of course Im getting this wrong! Im wrong to be even standing here in the first place! Im wrong to interrupt ur little romantic meeting!" Asuka spatted angrily, she turned around and began walking back.

"Asuka! Wait! Gaaaah! Couldn't u just be nicer to my sister?" Shinji finally said, sounding frustrated.

Asuka almost tripped at the word 'sister', she turned around to look at Shinji, her eyes widened in total shock, her expression unreadable. "She's your WHAT?"

"My sister! Or at least half-sister, u could say." Shinji calmed down a bit, swallowing hard.

'So this rival I have been competing so hard with is Shinji's freaking SISTER? God Im so pathetic! And why Shinji never told me about it, even in my old world?' "Well, third, why did you not tell me about this earlier?" Asuka asked in a demanding tone.

"Sorry…" The auto pilot still working. "Listen, Asuka. I know about things that I shouldn't know. This being one of them. Just don't tell anyone about this. Please." Shinji said with pleading eyes.

'Shinji knows about some NERV's secrets that I, as a time traveler, don't even know of. What a humiliation.' "Well, you can certainly count on me to keep your secret, Shinji. I promise." Asuka said, walking into the apartment. "Anyways, this place is so dirty. I thought you were caring enough to help improve your precious sister's living condition. And hi there, Ayanami." She greeted Rei, who only gave a nod.

Irritated by Rei's coldness, Asuka decided to ignore her for now. She walked past Rei, examing the house. There was dirt everywhere. Then she came across a trash can, immediately recognized a certain box.

'Mein Gott… this is some hard tranquilizers… and the mood suppressants… Mein Gott… My stepmom was trying to make me a… doll… using these prescriptions…' "Ayanami, were you… taking these drugs?" Asuka said, horrified.

"Doctor Akagi instructed me to take the medicine. Her actions were approved by the commander."

"Ayanami… you shouldn't be taking these… they make you into… a doll…"

"I am not a doll."

"What's going on here?" Shinji came in, he had just finished organizing the mailbox.

"Shinji, your… emm, Rei, was taking some medicine that was supposed to deal with serious mental disorders… they effectively caused Ayanami to be emotionless like this…"

"Wha-"

"Shinji… Im scared… I… I dont want to be like wonder girl! Who knows whether they would treat us like this? I'd rather die than live like this!" Asuka cried, her beautiful blue pupils still unfocused due to astonishment.

"Doctor Akagi has increased my dosage today. She required my presence in my apartment for the convenience of observation." Rei suddenly said.

"Rei… listen, you can't take these medicines anymore… they will only hurt you!" Shinji was worried about her, and grabbed Rei's right hand.

Asuka promptly flinched at Shinji's sudden physical contact with Rei, but soon calmed down as she remembered Rei's identity. "Ayanami, you should really listen to your broARHWOOPHMPF!" Shinji quickly covered Asuka's mouth using his vacant hand, blinked several times at Asuka. Asuka nodded, 'so, even Rei herself doesn't even know about this. I wonder how come Baka-Shinji acquired this information?' Shinji removed his hand. "Ahem, yes, Rei. Just stop taking these pills!"

"But the Commander had approved such arrangement."

"Aya… Rei, you shouldn't let others decide what you do. How about this, you can do some research online about these medicines. See what they could do to your body. Then you can decide whether to take them anymore. Sounds good?" Asuka said in a concerned voice, since she could totally relate to the situation.

"Your suggestion is… agreeable." After a few seconds, Rei finally replied.

Both Shinji and Asuka sighed in relief. "Shinji, we should probably go home. Its getting late. I don't want to hear Misato tease us about we went on a date or something!" Asuka grabbed Shinji's wrist and dragged him along, who offered little resistance. Shooting a final concerning gaze to Rei, Shinji exited the apartment.

Both teens walked toward their apartment in silence. They were still processing the shocking information. 'So that's why she always acts like a doll,' Asuka thought, shaking her head, 'It's a lot harder to hate her now. It's not her fault to act like this. And she's Shinji's sister? That's even more astonishing. And she doesn't, no, couldn't know about it? There are so many dark secrets in NERV.' She sighed, turning around to see Shinji had a deep frown on his face.

"Oi, Baka!" Shinji turned his gaze to Asuka, "What do we do about your sister? I mean, I've always hated dolls. But it's not her fault. We need to get her off the drugs, and she may become a normal teenage girl someday!"

"I guess…" Shinji was not really listening to Asuka, since he had so much in his head. His sister, drugs, and the incoming fight with Sandalphon. "What kind of answer was that? Oi! Baka-Shinji! This is your sister we are talking about!" Asuka raised her volume and flicked Shinji's forehead.

"Ouch! Errr, Asuka?" Shinji finally snapped out of his train of thought, "Ah, for sure we need to get Rei off the drugs! But it's her decision, right? We can't really force her off the drugs! In the current state, she may even report this to my father! Anyways, I think I should tell Misato-san about this." Shinji knew Misato was in the Chain of Command, but he also knew Misato would not betray him. She was also kept from most of NERV's dark secrets, after all.

"Sure. I guess there's nothing more we could do for now, then." Asuka sighed, eyes looking at the ground, "Well, have you heard about the school trip to Okinawa? I'm soooo looking forward to it! Also, I can buy some new swimsuits tomorrow!" 'Although I've already known that we aren't going, this is a perfect chance to go shopping with Shinji.'

"Ah, yes. But I thought we pilots are on a permanent stand by? That, we are not supposed to leave Tokyo-3?" Shinji answered, clearly not getting Asuka's ideas.

"…" Asuka was almost speechless. "Anta Baka? ErrrARGHH! You are so frustrating!" She rolled her eyes and walked faster, leaving Shinji behind.

'Women are impossible to understand…' Sighing internally, Shinji thought, 'Why would she say about swimsuit shopping to me tho? I thought the last time she went shopping with Kaji-san…' Suddenly, the realization came down on him.

"Shinji, lets go to school together, I don't want to walk alone."

"Shinji, lets walk to the part and talk. Im bored."

"Shinji, lets go buy some snacks."

'She was asking me to do a lot of things with her… She wanted to go shopping with ME? Ah, it makes much more sense now why she acted like that. Gah, I would have never realized this if not Asuka in my world taught me how to deal with girls. But it will certainly sound perverted if I directly say anything about swimsuits.' Shinji quickly picked up his pace, catching up to Asuka. "Asuka, emmm… since we are not going to Okinawa, I wonder if we could do something together? Like… swimming in NERV's pool?"

Asuka smiled, but not turning around. "hmpf, fine, whatever. Still gonna buy the swimsuits, tho."

Misato had just emptied another can of beer. She was sitting on the floor, watching some soap shows on TV. With a hiss of the door and a synchronized announcement of "We're home!", two teens entered the room.

"Welcome home!" Misato greeted, smiling. But her smile faded to a frown as she saw both teens' dejected expression. "What's wrong? Did you guys have a fight?"

"It's not about us, Misato-san," Shinji sighed, "It's about Rei."

"What about her?" Misato was so close to start teasing with 'Did you get her pregnant but she forced herself to swallow it, knowing it was probably not a good time for such an inappropriate comment.

"Well, it's hard to say… Misato-san, can we trust you about not telling anyone else, including Doctor Akagi? Because this may cause some bad things to happen…" Shinji replied, a pleading look in his eyes.

Misato's eyes twitched, "Whoa, you seem so serious! What's wrong?" 'Don't tell me he did get her pregnant,' "Sure, you can count on me on keeping it secret if it could threaten your safety!"

Sighing again, Shinji stammered, "Misato-san, R-Rei, i-is…"

"Rei has been drugged by the blonde bitch!" Asuka couldn't stand it longer, speaking angrily.

"Who is blonde-you mean Ritsuko? Asuka! this is very impolite to…" Misato was angry at first, since that's her friend Asuka was swearing at. But her reasoning quickly calmed her down. 'Wait, what did she mean by 'drugged?' I want to get more information before jumping to any conclusions.' "Asuka, watch your language! What did you mean by drugged?"

"Well, what did it sound like? Drugged, d-r-u-g-g-e-d, by an insane amount of tranquilizers, mood suppressants, and sedatives! I don't

even know how her body even functions!"

"WHA-Ho-how did you find out?" Misato was clearly shocked by the information, her expression unreadable.

"Misato-san, I was worried about Rei today since she didn't go to school. I went to her apartment, and Asuka followed me there. It was Asuka who found out about the drugs, since…"

"Since I was drugged by the same damn thing before," Asuka continued in a low voice, her eyes unfocused and gazing directly forward.

"Tha… that's pretty bad," Misato said, "Are you sure it's Rits? What did Rei say?"

"She said Doctor *Akagi* instructed her to take them, and the commander has approved it!"

"Ah… Why… Rits…" Misato was still confused. 'You are hiding a lot of information from me, Rits. One day I will find out.' "So… Why would you tell me about all this?"

"Because we trust you, Misato-san," Shinji looked directly into her eyes, "we are a family, eh? Family members are supposed to trust each other, right?"

"Right, Shinji, we are a family…" Misato sighed, "Alright you two, go do something else. Shinji can make some dinner, Asuka, you may take a shower if you want. I have to process this information…" She stood up and went for another beer.

"Baka. Don't go overboard." Asuka smiled, being pulled up from the deadly red abyss. "How are you going to survive this without a D-type equipment?"

"Hadn't thought that far. But If the battery runs out, the muscle will still lock on." Shinji said, his voice indifferent. The timer on the screen kept flashing, indicating a very low battery level.

As time went by, the entry plug became hotter and hotter. Finally, the battery drained before they made it to the surface. As magma crush onto the unprotected Unit 01, Shinji closed his eyes, smiling…

"… ka, Wake up!" Shinji shot open his eyes, finding Asuka standing beside his bed, shaking his shoulder.

"Asuka? Wha…"

"Baka! You were having a nightmare! Your body was twitching! And… you were mumbling something."

"What? What did I say?" Shinji remembered his dream, suddenly feeling nervous about what he could have said.

"You were… mumbling my name," Asuka said, her face slightly blushed. "Maybe it wasn't a bad dream at all? Did I interrupt something?" She said in a teasing tone.

'Great, Shinji Ikari. I knew it!' "Ah! NO! Asuka, it's not like what you think! It was indeed some kind of nightmare!"

"Eh? What is that supposed to mean? So dreaming about me is a nightmare to you?!" Asuka said angrily, however, her eyes were telling Shinji something else… there was hurt in her eyes.

"Sorry! That's not what I meant! I…" Shinji took a deep breath. "I dreamed about me dying. While… saving you."

'What? This certainly sounds weird.' "What do you mean, Third Child? It's not like I need anyone's help! At most, it should be me dying to save your ass!"

"… Maybe. But I don't want to see you hurt. Just like I said: you are… emmm, important to me."

"Hmpf, enough sappy words already! Forget about your stupid dream and make breakfast! We have some shopping to do today!"

"Hai. Wait, shopping? What for?" Shinji got up, thankfully he was still wearing something.

"Anta Baka? I need to get some new swimsuits! My old ones are getting tight!"

Shinji blushed at the thought of seeing Asuka wearing a bikini, "Wha-t? I… It's so embarrassing! I'm a boy, and we are not like… together or something! You should do this with Hikari!" Although he already half-expected it, he was trying to sound not so enthusiastic. For one, he had already seen much more; Second, he doesn't want Asuka to regard him as a pervert, which he thought would very likely to happen if he accepted her offer immediately.

"Hmpf, you are so boring! Boys would die for such an opportunity! Also, don't get wrong ideas! I only asked you to come to carry the bags for me! Maybe I could also get you some new clothes since you always wear the same stupid boring school uniform!" Asuka said, walking out of Shinji's room, "Just get going already! I'm tired of waiting!"

Shinji had kept his dejected expression on his face along the way just like any other man would do when shopping with girls. Asuka, on the other hand, was looking happy. 'I finally got this dense Baka coming out with me. Meh, it's not like it was easier the first time.'
"Hey, Baka, we are here."

Shinji turned his head, just to look at a full store of revealing swimsuits. He immediately blushed and turned around, "Err, Asuka, you can go get what you want. I… I will be waiting for you here."

Asuka pouted, "Fine, whatever." She walked into the store and went directly for the bikini with white and red stripes on it. She put on the

swimsuit in the changing room, came out, and called to Shinji. "Shinji! What do you think about this one?"

Shinji reluctantly turned his head around, but once he saw at her his gaze couldn't move an inch. Asuka's body was perfect in that swimsuit. Although he had seen more, after such a long time (after he time traveled) he still found himself frozen on the sight. His face blushed so red that would make Asuka's Unit 02 ashamed.

Asuka was clearly satisfied with his reaction. She turned away with a faint smile on her face, walking into the changing room. Shinji just stood there; his brain was running at full power. 'Why did she just show off her *assets* to me? Asuka in my world said it means the girl likes you… Well, I guess she's not wrong…'

After a minute or so, Asuka came out wearing her blue shirt and jeans. "Shinji, let's go get some decent clothes for you!"

"Ah, yes Asuka," Shinji shook his head, trying to wipe out his perverted thoughts, "Well, what do you want to get for me?"

"Emmm, some stylish t-shirts, a pair of jeans… at least something different. I don't want to come out with you wearing some boring school uniform!" Asuka crossed her arms around her chest, pouting.

"Emmm, what do you mean by 'come out'? I mean, we are not…"

"Don't push your luck, Third Child! After all, I have to come out with you casually, since we live together! Heh!" Asuka acting tsundere was nothing but cute.

Shinji smiled, "Verstanden Mein Führer"

Asuka made another half-laugh, "You'd better be!"

Rei was reading. Instead of reading a book, she was reading the instructions on the cover of the medicine. 'This particular medicine is

meant to treat people who have severe mood shifts by completely wiping out their emotions. But I am not in such a condition. Shinji and Asuka also seem to care about me. No one has ever done that for me before, except Commander Ikari. And that only happened once. Shinji and Asuka told me to make my own decision. Asuka said only dolls listen to others without rejection. I am not a doll. Maybe I should listen to them, and stop taking these pills.' Having made her decision, Rei stood up and threw the medicine inside her wardrobe.

Shinji stared at his computer screen, trying to remember how Asuka had done the physics question last time. He thought he remembered something vaguely, but he was sure that he had forgotten about it. Looking around, he saw Asuka had just come out of the NERV swimming pool, walking in his direction. But he didn't see Rei anywhere. That made him worried. "What are you doing, Shinji? Why don't you come for a swim?" Asuka asked, a smirk on her face.

"Sorry," Shinji replied, eyes still focusing on his screen. "I'm doing physics homework right now. Jeez, this is so hard!"

"Well, let me have a look," Asuka leaned over, giving Shinji a perfect view of her breasts, "Ah, these are easy." Typing. "Annnnd done!"

Shinji was still amazed by Asuka's intelligence, even though he had already experienced this once. "Wow, so that's the college-graduate girl that I know of."

"What do you expect from me? All in all, I'm the great Asuka Langley Soryu." Asuka smiled, "And what's this question asking for? You know, I can't really understand kanji well."

"Ah, this question is asking about thermal expansion," Shinji replied, "It sounds simple enough, but in terms of application…"

Asuka got up and turned around a little, "Well, think about the application part in this way," she pulled her hands up to her chest, "If

I was to warm up my breasts, do you think they will get bigger, or smaller?"

"Yours are already big enough I guess," Shinji had prepared an answer for this, "It's not like you are not attractive if they are not larger."

Asuka was somewhat flattered, her face blushing a little. "Well, it's good for you to appreciate my beauty! Anyways, wanna swim now?"

"Sure, but I'm not really good at it." Shinji felt satisfied with his performance.

"It's no problem, I could teach you." Asuka smiled, 'Shinji's finally not so boring. Good work, Asuka.' "Now, just get your asses moving!"

Shinji quickly got up and grabbed his swimsuit. After few minutes, he came back to the pool, and Asuka was already in the water, waiting for him.

"Now, Shinji, tell me how much you know about swimming?"

"Well, I don't really know much other than lying in the water floating."

"Fine, now get down here, lie in the water, face down. Don't worry! I will support you!"

Shinji sighed, sitting down on the edge of the pool, putting his legs into the water. Seeing how reluctant he was, Asuka grabbed his wrist and dragged him down the water.

Shinji's whole body shivered at the sudden contact with cold water, but soon adjusted. He felt relieved as his feet touched down on the bottom of the pool.

"Now, get your feet off the ground! Which part of 'lying in the water facing down' you don't understand?" Asuka raised her volume, putting her right hand at Shinji's abdomen, her left hand at his chest,

lifting Shinji up. The buoyance of water made it very easy for her to do it.

Shinji, on the other hand, was promptly starting to feel uncomfortable in his pants, as Asuka's smooth hands pressing against his body had triggered some pleasant memories. He quickly calmed down, again using his old method of imagining a naked Commander Ikari.

Just as he was wondering in his own thought-world, Asuka retreated her hands slowly, trying not to make Shinji notice. And he did not. Asuka was happy that Shinji could still keep floating on himself. That's a good start.

"200 meters… 300 meters…"

The atmosphere in the research lab near Mount Asama had been tense ever since Captain Katsuragi had arrived. Although the woman was messy at home, she could be formal and professional when needed.

They had been descending an unmanned drone into the pool of magma, hoping to find the source that was causing the disruption in the magma flow under Mount Asama. However, they hadn't found anything yet; and the drone was approaching dangerous depths.

"Captain Katsuragi," The lead scientist spoke up as he watched the altitude of the drone continue to drop more and more. "This drone will never be able to withstand the pressures you plan on putting it through."

"If we destroy it, then NERV will pay for a new one." She said in an indifferent tone.

"Maximum safety depth reached." The young research announced.

"Continue the descend." Misato's gaze never moved a bit from the screen.

Moments later, a loud crack of metal was heard, and Misato gritted her teeth. They just needed to go a little bit farther down. The drone finally reached the depth that Misato wanted, and just at that moment, another loud crack was heard, and the video feed was severed.

"The drone has been destroyed." One of the engineers announced in comms.

"Did you get the photo?" Misato turned her head toward the screen that the technician was looking at.

"Yeah." On the screen was a picture of what looked like a skeletal embryo of some sort. "The scan reads pattern blue." He swallowed hard, "It's an Angel."

Misato took a deep breath and stood straight. "Everyone, this laboratory is now officially under the jurisdiction of NERV!" She announced, "This facility is to be locked down. No one is to get in or out! And anything that happens here is to be declared confidential!"

SEELE 01: "Ikari, I have noticed that NERV had issued an order A-17 to engage the 8th Angel."

Ikari: "That is correct."

SEELE 03: "Are you sure this is safe? We have never acted offensive before!"

Ikari: "I will ensure the execution of the scenario. A living sample of an Angel will provide helpful information."

SEELE 08: "Ikari, you know what happens when the scenario is threatened."

Ikari: "That is correct."

SEELE 03: "You'd better be, Gendo. Besides, it seems like the Second and Third Children are getting close to each other."

Ikari: "I have received Section 2 reports regarding the closeness between the Second and Third Children. Thus the anchor is chosen. In the worst case, after all of the Angel is defeated, I will sacrifice the Second to Make the Third child manipulatable."

Shinji and Asuka walked towards Rei's apartment. They were both worried about her since they both noticed Rei's absence from the pool, and they both remembered that in their timeline, Rei was there with them.

"Do you think Rei would listen to us?" Shinji asked, worried. He never thought about why Rei was acting as she did, he always thought that was her personality. However, he was happy about Asuka actually started accepting Rei. He didn't know why Asuka had always hated her; now though, he knew that Asuka was half-jealous, and another half came from her hatred towards dolls. Now that both reasons were invalidated, she really didn't have to hate her anymore.

"Relax, Shinji, I'm sure that wonder girl could take care of herself!" Asuka reassured Shinji, but she was indeed somewhat worried. 'It's not like anything worse than what had happened could happen,' she tried to convince herself, 'and we really should get her out of that dump. It was a freaking demolition zone!'

Standing in front of the door of Rei's apartment, Shinji felt extremely nervous. He knocked on the door several times, but no replies were coming out. Shinji knocked again, "Rei! It's us! Are you here? May we come in?" Still no reply.

Shinji and Asuka exchanged a worried look, Asuka nodded. Shinji pushed the door open, a strain of light shined into the dark room. "Rei, are you here? We are coming in!" Shinji asked, keeping his voice low.

"Shinji…" mumbling.

"Rei!" Shinji swiftly ran towards Rei's bed and saw her lying there. Her expression was painful. "Rei, are you okay? What happened to you? Did they… let you take more drugs?"

"I… I stopped (swallow) taking them two days ago. It is expected that I will be experiencing (swallow) withdrawal symptoms. This includes nausea… (swallow), tiredness, and…" Rei peeked her head out of the bed, Shinji immediately grabbed a nearby plastic bag and put it under Rei's mouth. Rei vomited into the bag. Asuka came and handed her a piece of tissue.

"God damn it! I should have expected these withdrawal symptoms!" Asuka said, clearly angry with herself. "Rei, we need to call Section 2 and they will get you to NERV hospital! ARGHHHHH! Fuck it! I don't care if the blonde bitch knows or not!"

"That is… not desirable. There is a high probability that she will increase my dosage if she knows."

"Asuka! Rei's right! We can't let her know! Maybe we can get some pills that deal with these withdrawal symptoms for her!"

"Ye, you are probably right… Rei, we are going to get you some medicine! Oh, Scheiße!" Asuka cursed as she felt her phone started vibrating. "An Angel attack? Seriously? What a great timing!"

"You two need to go. I am in no immediate danger of permanent damage. I can be replaced if I die."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Asuka still didn't know about the truth of Rei. She didn't see it in her world's Shinji's memory.

Shinji on the other hand had full awareness of Rei's identity. Even so, he couldn't just leave her alone. He also knew that this particular Angel attack can wait, since the Angel was still in its dormant embryo

form. "Rei, we can't leave you like this! We need to get you some treatment!"

"There is another solution. I can come with you, and get treatment from NERV. I will Make up a lie about my health condition."

Both Asuka and Shinji had blinked. Did Rei just say she was willing to lie? That's something new.

Section 2 guards came into the apartment as they were thinking, and said to the pilots in a monotonous tone, "Pilot Ayanami, Pilot Soryu, Pilot Ikari. You are required to report to NERV headquarters immediately."

Seeing no one could have a better solution to the situation, the pilots reluctantly turned around, "Pilot Ayanami is in no condition to pilot. She needs medical attention now, me and Pilot Soryu will fight against the Angel."

Section 2 agents nodded at them and called for a stretcher. They got Rei into a separate car from Asuka and Shinji, and headed for the Geofront.

Inside NERV headquarters, Ritsuko frowned as she read about Section 2's report on pilots' conditions. 'So Rei's sick, but that's not very likely. And the symptoms look exactly like withdrawal symptoms from the pills I gave her. Hmmmm, interesting.' Misato snapped her out of her train of thought, "Rits, we are down an EVA. Will Unit 01 and 02 be enough to handle this?"

"More than enough. The original plan was to have Unit 00 on stand by at the headquarters, so it won't make much difference."

Misato was fighting about whether to talk about the drug Ritsuko had instructed Rei to take. For one, she was a friend to Ritsuko. But she also knew that this woman is not that simple. She decided to put it

aside for now, since the offensive against the Angel was more important.

Inside the girl's locker room, Asuka had changed to the heat-resistant plug suit. She remembered how ugly this thing was, and decided to not inflate it until she got into the entry plug.

"AHHHH! What did you do to my Unit 02?" She still had to act innocent.

"It is a D-Type equipment, designed to work under extreme conditions," Ritsuko explained. As Asuka turned her death glare towards her, she felt a chill ran down her spine. 'Does she hate me so much just because of this?' Shaking her head off the thoughts, she continued, "Asuka, do you understand the mission?"

"Yeah, yeah." Asuka felt disgusted to just talk to this woman. Of course in her timeline, Ritsuko had already done a lot of bad things, making Asuka hate her. And now the whole drug thing just made it worse. Asuka turned around to look at Shinji, who was obviously looking nervous. "Hey, Baka. Don't worry, knowing my superior piloting skills, it has to be me to do this job." 'And I trust you to get me out of there, Baka-Shinji.'

Shinji forced a smile. He never wanted Asuka to do this. But he also knew that it could be more dangerous for Asuka if she had to save him. "Yes, Asuka. I believe you."

Things went on as they remembered. Now Asuka was hanged by the cables above the volcano. The engine roared, and Unit 02 began its descent.

"Three-fifty… Four-hundred…" Maya announced the depth of Unit 02 as it descends.

Shinji merely let out a sigh and shook his head as he watched Unit 02 went deeper and deeper.

"Five-fifty… Six-hundred… Six-fifty… Seven-hundred…" Misato began to tap her foot nervously as she saw that pressure was increasing steadily around the critical joints of Unit 02.

Shinji kept his eyes down at the pool of magma below. Even though only a few minutes had passed, it felt like an eternity. He tried to wipe his thoughts clean, but unable to. He had to save her, after all. Remembering how close it was, he couldn't help but clenched his fist tight around the control yoke.

Inside Unit 02, the redhead could feel sweat start to pour out her body. Most of them were caused by heat, but there was also cold sweat caused by nervousness and anxiety.

"C'mon, Asuka." She mumbled to herself. "You have done this before. What's so hard about this? At least, you have that Baka backing you up."

"Maximum safety depth reached." Maya's voice filled the cockpit.

Asuka could hear the sound of metal compressing under the immense pressure around her.

"Unit 02 has reached the estimated target level," Maya announced. The cable stopped moving, letting Asuka dangle in the middle of the magma pool.

"Asuka," Misato spoke. "What do you see?"

"I'm not detecting anything." She answered. "It's not here."

"The lava currents must be faster than we thought," Ritsuko concluded.

"The target's velocity certainly doesn't match our predictions," Makoto said, eyes focusing on the readings on the screen.

"Well hurry up and recalculate," Misato ordered. "Continue the descent."

"Huh?" Makoto turned around and gave the Captain a perplexed look. "Are you sure? If we go much deeper then the pilot could be put in danger."

"Asuka, are you okay out there?" Misato asked.

"Im perfectly fine. Lets continue."

Taking a deep breath, Makoto pressed a button to continue the descent.

Asuka kept searching for the target. There is no guarantee that the Angel would drift to the exact same location as in her timeline. As she went deeper and deeper, she could feel the pressure building around her body as the armor of D-Type equipment was pressed hard against Unit 02.

"Asuka, what's your status?" Misato's voice came from the comms.

"Nothing to worry about. I just want to get this done and take a shower."

"Good. There's a nice hot spring near the mountain." Misato said with a smirk. She had always liked the redhead's confidence.

With a loud crack, the prog knife broke and fell into the red abyss.

"Scheiße!" Asuka cursed, "I've lost my prog knife!"

"Catch mine, Asuka! Im sending it down to you!" Without hesitation or order, Shinji threw his prog knife down into the volcano.

"Depth, seventeen-eighty." Maya spoke. "Unit 02 has reached the estimated target depth."

Asuka began to look around her. "I think I see it." She said. About 30 meters in front of her was the oval-shaped Angel.

"Scanner is reading blue." Makoto confirmed. "It's the Angel."

"Begin capture." Misato commanded.

The electromagnetic cage that was mounted on Unit 02's hands began to open up and extend. Asuka's heart rate began to increase as she approached the egg.

"Asuka, you only have one shot at this." Ritsuko said in the comms.

Asuka took a deep breath once the egg was within her grasp. The electromagnetic walls took form, sealing the embryo inside.

"The Angel has been captured." She sighed. "Beginning ascent to the surface."

Everyone above the surface sighed in relief as the mission seemed accomplished, except Shinji. The prog knife he threw was halfway down. It should make it to Unit 02's location not long after the Angel hatches.

"What's happening?" Asuka yelled, "The Angel's hatching!"

Everyone in the command room tensed up. The video feed was indeed showing the rapid growth of the embryo.

"Abort the mission!" Misato ordered, "Jettison the cage! The destruction of the Angel now has the highest priority!"

Asuka quickly gave up the cage, "Where's the knife?" She asked, panicking.

"It's one hundred meters above you!" Maya said, "It's about to reach your position, Asuka!"

"Got it!" Asuka took a firm grip on the knife. "Now let's get this done!"

The Angel swam directly towards her as she remembered. Asuka still had to detach the weight to escape from a potentially deadly attack.

"I've lost the sight of the target!" Asuka said, "C'mon, show yourself!"

The Angel appeared again, charging faster this time. Asuka raised her knife to block the attack. The Angel took a firm grip on Unit 02, and opened its mouth, trying to swallow its head.

"Oh my god, it can't just open its mouth in lava like that!" Ritsuko was shocked, failing to think about any solution. Everybody else was watching the video feed nervously as Unit 02's attacks on the Angel went ineffective.

'so it always has to become like this,' Asuka thought. Without a word, she raised her knife and cut off one of the cables.

Which was the biggest mistake she could make that time.

"Misato! Im using thermal expansion!" Asuka shouted in comms.

"Yes! Thermal expansion!" Ritsuko said, turning toward Makoto, "send all coolant through cable three!"

The coolant flew out the severed cable and poured onto the Angel's core. Using all her might, Asuka slammed the prog knife onto it. The Angel cried in pain as its body began giving out. Its right hand severed all cables, leaving only a small part of the cable connecting, before its whole body fell and disintegrated.

Asuka looked up. She heard people yelling in comms. She saw Unit 01 coming down. Everything was proceeding as intended. But something's not right.

Unit 01 was too far away.

She suddenly realized her mistake. She had killed the Angel too early. Back in her timeline, the Angel had kept ascending with her for

a while. But this time she was in a hurry, and by the time the Angel was defeated, she was still far below the surface.

Inside Unit 01, Shinji had also noticed the issue. 'no no no no no…' He was desperately trying to dive down as fast as possible, Unit 01's hand gripping on the cables and pulling itself downwards. 'Just… so close… few hundred meters…'

The cable snapped.

Unit 02 fell down.

Unit 01 reached out its arm, just to grab on to a handful of magma.

Asuka sighed, suddenly feeling relieved. 'I guess this is it, then. Ha, I should've died already anyway. I wonder where would I go after I die? Probably back to where I came from. It's just… this Shinji would be so sad…' She opened her comm window to Unit 01.

"… to-san! Send the cable down! I NEED TO SAVE HER! MISATO-SAN! MAKOTO-SAN! PLEASE! LET ME DOWN! please (sob)… I can't lose her… (sob)"

"Baka, why would you cry?" She smiled into the window.

"Asuka! I… I… I need you! I… Misato-san! Please let me down!"

"Baka, you'll still have others (crack), you still have (crack) Rei, Misato, (crack), all these people who care about (crack) you."

"Asuka… no… please…" *'no no No NO NO NO NO! I love you Asuka! I can't lose you! Don'teave me! I… I can't take it anymore…'*
"Asuka, you… I…"

"Baka, don't cry. Shinji, (crack) I just (crack) want you to (crack) know, that… I'm ha(crack)ppy to have you (crack) in my life… Shinji… I (CRACK) Buzzzzzzzzz…"

The feed became static after a loud crack.

"ASUKAAAAAAAAAA!" Shinji's cry had filled the entire channel.

'Is this what it takes to try to play with time? To just lose her again?' Shinji's eyes were filled with tears, they flew out of his eyes, and immediately dissolved into LCL.

Inside the command center, everyone watched in silence as Asuka and Shinji's last exchange was played. After the final crack, the feed from Unit 02 became static.

"Pilot vitals… signal lost. Video feed… signal lost. Voice feed… signal lost. All sensors have gone dark. Unit 02… has gone silent." Makoto said slowly.

"Are… are there any possibility of recovery? Even if it's only…" Misato swallowed hard, feeling her eyes started to become teary.

"Technically yes," Ritsuko said, "We could use a big magnet to recover it. Though whatever we get up would be nothing more than a squeezed metal ball. As for the pilot…" She trailed off as she herself was disgusted by the image in her head.

The background was only Shinji's crying and mumbling.

The people inside the command center remained silent for a long time. Aoba was just sitting there, eyes in disbelieve. Makoto stared into the screen that was once Unit 02's status panel, still hoping what he was seeing was fake. Misato just stood there, tears ran down her eyes, sobbing softly.

Ritsuko stood for a while, and sighed. She took out her workstation, connected to MAGI, and started typing.

MAGI database/pilot database

Pilot name: Soryu Asuka Langley

Pilot status: K.I.A.

AN: Sorry for the cliffhanger. The next chapter will be out in two days, maybe one. I know you guys can't wait where I left with, if you don't hate me for what I did LOL. Reveal of Asuka and Shinji's true identity in the next Chapter. Canon is officially out of the window.

Rebirth

AN: Hi guys, promise kept! I don't want to keep you guys waiting since I know how unexpected the last chapter was. There were several reasons that I wrote "Asuka dies" scene in the last chapter. First, in the canon only 8th and 14th Angel had posted a real physical threat to her, other Angels were dealt with relatively easily. Second, since this fanfic also carries the purpose of practice, I wanted to try writing some emotional scenes and see how well I could do. Third, I need an event to push the plot forward. I don't really want to stick to the canon that much. So the earlier I make a significant divergence, the earlier you guys can get something fresh.

In this chapter, the truth about Asuka and Shinji will be revealed.

Anyways, remember this is an AsuShin story. And we still have a long way to go. Leave a Review!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 6: Death and Rebirth

Shinji walked along the shore of the sea of LCL. He kept walking for a long time. After what felt like an eternity, he thought he saw something familiar. Something red on the beach far away from him, but he could clearly see it. He started running towards it. As the red figure grew in size, he could recognize it as a person. He saw the person's bright ginger hair. He saw the red plug suit. He saw two red A-10 clips resting on the person's head. He saw Asuka.

"Asuka!" He cried out; tears began filling his eyes.

The person turned around, smiling. It was indeed Asuka. "Hi, Baka Shinji."

"Asuka!" Shinji picked up his speed.

"Baka Shinji, I've been waiting for you." Asuka said, still smiling.

Shinji nearly crashed on her; he slid to the front of her on his knees, his arm instantly wrapped around her legs. "Asuka… Is this real? Asuka… Don't leave me… I-I love you!"

"You love me?" Asuka said, her expression never changed. "I thought you hated me."

"Wha-What?" Shinji gasped, "No! I have never hated you!"

"No. You hate me. You left me to die." Asuka said, her body starting to fade away.

"No no no no! Asuka! Don't leave me! Asuka! A…"

"… suka!" Shinji shot up from his bed, hyperventilating. His body was soaked in sweat, his eyes filled with tears. Remembering what had happened seven days earlier, he couldn't help but started crying harder.

'I lost her… I lost her… I failed… Again… It's all my fault… I was supposed to go down there, not her!' Shinji cried for a little longer. After several minutes, he calmed down a bit and looked around at the alarm. It was saying 4:32 a.m. Sighing, he got up and changed his clothes. Just as he saw the T-shirt that Asuka had picked for him, he suddenly felt another urge to cry. He suppressed it by swallowing hard, wiping the tears off his face. Misato was very busy these days, due to the tremendous amount of paperwork caused by the loss of Unit 02. She was constantly absent from home, and that had left Shinji alone in the apartment. He had never felt so lonely before. He sighed again, standing up from his bed, and exited his room. Knowing he wouldn't get any more sleep, he decided to make some breakfast. Today was supposed to be the day that school resumes, since his classmates were about to return from their trip to Okinawa. Misato had already left the apartment, leaving a note on the table, saying she has something important to do at NERV.

The day after the incident, NERV HQ

SEELE 01: "Ikari, I've read the reports regarding the loss of Unit 02 and the Second Child has been identified K.I.A. Do you have any arguments to defend yourself?" For once, Keel Lorenz actually sounded a little irritated.

SEELE 02: "Ikari, now Rei is in no condition to pilot, that leaves Unit 01 as the only combat-ready Unit! We all know Unit 01 is the key to instrumentality! We can't take the risk!"

Ikari: "This is… certainly unexpected." He paused for a few seconds, "But I do believe the scenario is not fundamentally threatened. After all, she will protect him no matter what." Although Gendo was so unwilling to use Unit 01 as a frontline combat Unit, since his beloved Yui was in there, for now, there are not many other options. "And Unit 03 and 04 will be combat-ready within a few weeks. Tell the Americans to transfer them to us as soon as possible."

SEELE 05: "I can hardly agree with you, Gendo. But there are not many options left. We will arrange the transportations as you wish."

Seven days after the incident, Mount Asama

Ritsuko looked at the MAGI operations log nervously. Outside of the command room, a huge titanium alloy armored electronic magnet was hanged on a big crane. The recovery of Unit 02, or rather its core since they didn't expect anything more, was supposed to take place much later, at least after the confirmation of Unit 02's exact location, which was supposed to be a nearly impossible task. However, the day after the incident, when she was checking on MAGI's operations log, she found something disturbing. The MAGI was recording everything that had happened that day, and at the time the communication with Unit 02 was cut off, MAGI started detecting AT-Field presence at Unit 02's location. The MAGI thought it natural that Unit 02 was to produce AT-Fields, so it didn't trigger any type of alarms, and MAGI merely recorded this in the log. Plus,

the people who were in the command room were too shocked to respond to anything, no one had noticed such a small anomaly. Aside from these strange occurrences, both pilot's sync ratios had been holding steady at near 90% during the last moments of the operation. Shinji must've been in great pain, although his AT-Field had blocked the major damage. But that's not important anymore.

Because the AT-Field hadn't disappeared yet.

Ritsuko frowned. This is virtually impossible. The internal battery of Unit 02 should have long drained completely by now, and the only goal of their mission was to recover the core. If it was not Unit 02 that's producing the AT-Field, then what it was? Another Angel? Or the 8th was still alive? Nah, they all saw the Angel disintegrated into nothingness, and pattern blue had indeed disappeared.

The MAGI detected that the source of the AT-Field is 3672 meters below the surface, resting on top of a cliff inside the magma chamber. At such depth, the pressure was enough to crush the whole Unit 02 and its D-Type equipment into a solid ball.

But now that they knew something was there. Whether it's Unit 02 or not, it was worth a try. After all, sending a completely unmanned magnet down the volcano has zero risks. As for the pressure, the magnet itself was completely solid, and it should still function even if its structural integrity was damaged.

"Starting the decent." Aoba said, "contact ETA 9 minutes."

Misato was also there. After all, she wanted at least a formal funeral to the Second Child, and the recovery of her body was much preferred, although she didn't get her hopes up. 'Just anything, anything would do… even if it's just…' She couldn't think further. Misato sighed, remembering how Shinji was acting for the past few days. She was very worried about Shinji's mental condition, although it didn't make much sense to her. 'Does he care about her that much? I mean, of course I feel very sad for her, but Shinji had only met her for about three weeks? I could see that they really liked each

other, but It's surprising to see Shinji became so depressed after she had gone.' Misato sighed; memories of the past few days emerged in her mind.

Two days after the incident, Katsuragi Residence

Misato entered the apartment, announcing "I'm home". She didn't get any reply which she always does. Sighing, she walked towards Shinji's bedroom and stood in front of the door. There was no sound coming out whatsoever, and that got Misato worried. She knocked on the door, and no reply came out. Sighing again, Misato said, "I'm coming in, Shinji-kun." She slid the door open.

Shinji was lying on the bed, his empty gaze directed at the ceiling. Listening to his SDAT, Shinji was completely still, and not showing any signs of acknowledging Misato's presence.

"You do love her, don't you?" Misato suddenly said after a minute of silence.

Shinji simply nodded.

Misato felt confused. They had only met each other for about 3 weeks, and they already fell in deep love like this? "Shinji, listen to me… you've only met her for about three weeks… and I know that doesn't sound right, but you should move on with your life. And… I promise you that we'll get her out, no matter what… and… we'll give her a formal…" She stopped speaking, seeing Shinji's body twitched at her words. "Mi-Misato-san, ha-have y-you, ever, felt s-so much pain, th-that yo-you stopped feeling an-anything? I felt… a part of me has died as well." In Shinji's mind, there were never two Asukas. There was only one Asuka, the girl that he loved, and he had lost her twice.

Misato took a deep breath, and tried again. "Shinji… I know that you are in great pain but… there are still people who care about you." Suddenly she remembered something. "And… Rei has been released from the hospital yesterday evening. I picked her up and

sent her to the apartment. And… I requested a change of accommodation for her. She will be living next to us, starting from next week." Much to Misato's surprise, Shinji's lips lifted a little, like a very slight grin. "Oh, I guess that's good…" Shinji finally realized that there were people that still cared for him; they won't just let him rot in his bed like this. "Mi-Misato-san, thanks."

Misato smiled, "Im always here for you, Shinji-kun."

Shinji ate his breakfast and packed up for school. He was so nervous. He didn't know whether he should, or could tell his friends about Asuka's decease. He sighed heavily and exited the apartment.

As he was walking into the school gate, everyone looked at him weirdly. It was understandable because his image was so messy. He didn't wash his hair, and his clothes were a mess. His eyes were bloodshot, and his expression dejected. People smartly avoided him, even those girls who were constantly harassing him were afraid to try anything. He slowly got up the stairs and walked into the classroom. He saw Toji was chatting with Hikari, and Kensuke was sitting in his seat, eyes looking at his computer. Rei was still absent.

"Hey, Shin-man! It's been… Whoa man, what happened? You look like a vagrant!" Toji said, a worried look on his face.

"He's not coming to school with the Red Devil, interesting," Kensuke said, his eyes still focusing on his laptop. "It's a shame that Okinawa was raining the whole week. We didn't even get out of the hotel. And I've heard from the news that something Angel related happened near Mount Asama, man those jets flying around! I wish I could've been there to take some shots!" Kensuke said, raising his newly bought camera by his left hand.

Shinji's whole body twitched hard as he heard the nickname, noticed by the stooges and also Hikari, who was starting to worry about her best friend.

"Shinji-kun, you fought an Angel?" Hikari said in a carefully low voice, "Where is… Asu… Soryu-san? Shouldn't she be with you?"

Shinji was biting so hard on his lips, trying to control his emotion as he heard her name. He turned around from his friends, and sobbed once.

Both the stooges fell silent as they realized that something's not right. Hikari's heart rate had gone up a lot, she felt a heavy weight was put on her heart. "Shinji-kun… I…"

The whole classroom had gone silent as they watched the whole exchange.

Shinji broke.

The rest of the class watched in dread as Shinji collapsed on his seat, head buried in his arms, sobbing uncontrollably, his mouth mumbling something.

"I'm sorry… I'm sorry… Asuka… I'm sorry…"

Hikari was the first one to be teared up other than Shinji. "No… She can't be…" Hikari collapsed in her seat as well, eyes looking directly in front of her. Toji, on the other hand, although he never liked the Red Devil, he still felt some sort of sadness, mostly to the state his friend was in. Kensuke was in pretty much the same situation. They felt the best thing they could do for now was to simply be there with Shinji.

After a few minutes, the Sensei came in. Hikari quickly returned to her normal composure, wiping out tears, she announced, "Rise! Bow! Sit!"

Sensei pushed his glasses a little higher. "Class, I have an announcement to make today. As some of you may have noticed, Classmate Soryu-san is missing. She's been transferred back to Germany, and thus resigned from our class."

Shinji felt a wave of uncontrollable rage shot up his body. After all she had done for the city, for the *humanity,* all she got is a fake announcement? What the hell? But the reasonable part of him told him that it was not Sensei's fault, since there's no way he could know the truth. So instead of giving a full face-punch to the old Sensei, he shot up from his seat and shouted, "ENOUGH!"

Everyone looked at him, some of them had fear in their eyes.

"Classmate Ikari-kun, please sit down, or you can stand in the hallway…"

"SHE DIED FOR YOU!" Shinji turned his face directly at Sensei, and then looked around. "SHE DIED FOR ALL OF YOU! EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU HERE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD ALREADY IF IT WAS NOT HER!" Shinji took a deep breath, "She… she's K.I.A. An honor… for a fighter like her. She died alongside her life's purpose…"

Shinji felt extremely tired as the effect of adrenaline began to cease. He couldn't take it more. Grabbing his school bag, he strode out of the classroom, shutting the door with enough force to cause the window on the door to be shattered, much to his surprise.

"… thirty-five fifty… thirty-six hundred… thirty-six fifty…" Maya announced, "We have reached the target depth."

"Attachment confirmed," Aoba said, "Whatever it is, the magnet had got it attached."

"Good work. Begin ascent." Ritsuko felt very nervous, 'whatever it is, it's producing an AT-Field. I fear my theory maybe actually correct…' She waited in extreme tension.

Misato was also very tense. She was also worried about Shinji's first school day. She didn't really care about the leak of the status of the pilot, since they were going to have a formal funeral after all. She

wanted the whole world to recognize what these CHILDREN have done for them. She was more worried about whether Shinji would be able to restrain himself from getting into a fight with someone in the school.

"… ETA 2 minutes until the target reaches the surface." Maya's announcement snapped Misato out of her train of thought. There was no camera or whatsoever mounted on the magnet since nothing like those would stand the pressure. So the only information they had was an electronic signal given by the magnet's change in resistance, which indicates that the magnet had captured additional metal.

Everyone watched the video feed nervously as the cable was being pulled up.

"Captain Katuragi, come with me. I need to check something about Unit 02." Ritsuko said. Misato nodded, and followed her out of the room.

The cable stopped shortening. At the end of it, was a huge chunk of metal glowing bright red, attached to a spherical magnet. The machine gently put down the remains of Unit 02, the crew nearby quickly started cooling it down. Steam shot up to the sky. After several minutes of cooling, the temperature of the chunk of metal finally decreased to a point where the laser cutting crew was able to get nearby.

Ritsuko watched the crew using the laser to cut through the armor, to get to the position where the core should be. From her terminal, she noticed that the AT-Field has disappeared moments ago. After half an hour or so, the crew suddenly stopped working, a technician walked down the working platform, heading towards Ritsuko. "Doctor Akagi, I think you need to see this."

Ritsuko followed the technician to the working platform. "Doctor Akagi, I believe this is what you call the entry plug of Evangelion Units." He raised his arm, pointing to a piece of grey metal that has a

big, almost unrecognizable "02" printed on it. The metal peeked out from a large cut done by the laser cutting crew, and its shape cylindrical.

The entry plug still held its cylindrical shape.

Just as Ritsuko was too shocked to realize that it's indeed true, Misato reacted faster. "GET BACK TO WORK! CAREFULLY CUT THE ENTRY PLUG OPEN!" She shouted as demanding as possible. She was so ready to pick up a laser cutter and start doing the job herself.

The crew quickly returned their position. They carefully cleared twisted metal around the cylinder, and the crane helped the chunk of metal to change its position, so that the head of the entry plug could touch the ground. Lasers shot out. Smoke rose. Everyone watched the crew nervously. Ritsuko patted Misato's shoulder, "You are aware that even if the entry plug is intact, it's been seven days without any life support, right? The oxygen should've drained on the first day already. Don't get your hopes up too much." Misato chose to ignore Rits, but she knew that she's right. There's no way a human could live without oxygen for *minutes,* not to mention the lack of food and water.

The head of the entry plug was cut open, the piece of metal that covered it fell on the ground. LCL poured out of the entry plug. Misato and Ritsuko pushed the crew aside, who was having an explosive chattering, shocking expression on their faces.

Misato arrived first, and peeked into the entry plug. She was astonished by what she saw, and stood still like a deer caught in the headlights, her right hand covering her mouth. Ritsuko arrived seconds later, she was also taken aback by the scene.

"Wha-"

Shinji walked along the sidewalk, his schoolbag still dangling around his arm. 'I couldn't believe I just did that,' he sighed, 'But I guess if it's for Asuka, it was worth it.' Shinji was completely expressionless. He thought that for now the only place he could go is to Rei's apartment.

Just as he walked into a small alleyway that leads to Rei's apartment, he was blocked by someone. Shinji turned around to look at the entrance of the alley, just to see a bunch of mobsters carrying baseball bats, and a knife. 'Great,' he thought, 'where's Section 2 when I actually need them?' The leading guy walked towards him, and pinned him on the wall. The mobster looked into Shinji's face, an evil grin on his face.

"Shinji Ikari. Do you know who I am?"

Shinji looked down, finding the guy's right hand bandaged. "You are the guy who got your fingers broke by Asuka, aren't you?" He suddenly felt rage started building up again. He also felt something else that he never felt before, like an extension to him, another part of his body that he never used before.

"Yeah, smart kid," Takuma cracked another evil smile, "I wonder where is she now? Shouldn't she be always with ya? Let me tell you… when I find her, I'll enjoy that slut, in front of ya… how does that sound to ya?"

"Don't call her that." Shinji said in a dangerously low voice.

"Heh? What are you gonna do about it, you little brat? Ha, she's so hot! I wonder what it feels like to put my dick…"

Shinji failed to control his rage. He used all his strength he thought he had to raise his right hand and punched Takuma in the face. Although he was not expecting this to work, since Takuma was much taller and masculine than him.

Then he saw Takuma was sent flying leftward, his body crashed against a metal trash box meters away, the metal frame of it bent

inwards. Blood all over Takuma's face.

Both Shinji and the mobsters around him were taken aback by the scene. Neither of them knew that Shinji, the kid that looked so scrawny, has possessed so much power.

The mobsters hesitated at their attack.

"Gods you were right… Eva pilots are a bunch of monsters…"

"Shut up! There're 6 of us, one of him! We will attack together and put him down!"

"No… Why Im doing this… I don't want to do this!"

"Who are these people? Oh my gods! He has fucking bodyguards! Run!"

Shinji just stood there, his brain still processing the information. His train of thought was broken by some concentrated sound of footsteps. The Section 2 agents finally arrived, immediately scaring off the mobsters. They couldn't run faraway tho, as the agents raised their handguns directly at them.

"You are under arrest by attempted kidnapping of NERV employee," One of the agents said, "handcuff them and send them to the NERV Prison."

Shinji relieved, turning his head to look at Takuma. The basketball guy was still bleeding hard, but breathing. A fearful look in his eyes. Sighing, Shinji asked Section 2 to take that guy for medical care, and continued his way to Rei's apartment.

The atmosphere inside NERV HQ had been tense ever since Misato and Ritsuko came back.

"What was that?" Misato asked, "What is a Sea of Dirac?"

"It's an imaginary space," Ritsuko said, "It's basically a gateway to another Universe."

"So you are telling me that, something or someone had transferred Asuka to somewhere else, used its AT-Field to keep the entry plug from collapsing, and sent her back after we picked Unit 02 up from the volcano?"

"Theoretically yes, but there are a lot of details unanswered. Since only EVAs and Angels could produce an AT-Field, and Unit 02 was certainly not the one which did it…"

"So… an Angel from another universe saved her? That sounds… disturbing. Why would an Angel ever do that? And what about the time? How could she still be alive, seven days without oxygen, food, or water? To be honest, now I'm gonna believe it if you just tell me Asuka herself is an Angel."

"Probably the passage of time in that universe is different from ours. Anyway, that is my theory for now. We will ask Asuka about more details once she woke up."

"Is it wise to immediately start to interrogate her right after her near-death? I thought we could let her rest for a few more days…" Misato sighed, getting irritated about the blonde's attitude. "I'm gonna call Shinji. He's been rotting ever since she's gone. I can't even imagine how he would act considering what I did back there."

"Wha-" Misato was astonished to see a perfectly intact Asuka lying on her pilot's seat. She immediately entered the plug, quickly checked on her vital signs, and was more shocked than happy to find her alive. However, the shock quickly died down once the realization came down on her. 'She's actually alive and unscratched, and Im not dreaming,' She thought, and gave Asuka a tight embrace, tears running down her face. Ritsuko came in as well, also shocked by the fact that she was alive, but soon she started worrying about something else-the source of AT-Field.

"Mi-Misato?" Asuka murmured, "Stop… Im… suffocating." Misato quickly loosened her hug, an apologetic and happy expression on her face. Asuka fell silent again, Misato was at first worried, but soon found out that she simply fell asleep due to tiredness.

"You can't tell him yet," Ritsuko said, "We are not sure whether Asuka is clear of contamination."

Misato snorted, "Rits, she's perfectly fine. Why wouldn't you just be less formal for once? You and I both know how important this is to Shinji."

Ritsuko shook her head and exited the command deck.

Shinji stood in front of Rei's apartment, and knocked on the door. "Rei, it's me, may I come in?"

"yes, Ikari-kun." Rei said in a tone that was… excited?

Shinji pushed the door open, surprised to find a Rei who's wearing something other than the school uniform - a light blue T-shirt which matched perfectly with her hair, and a pair of short jeans. Shinji had never seen Rei like this before, and this only made her much more beautiful.

"Ikari-kun," Rei said, "Im… happy to see you here." Whoa, that doesn't sound like Rei as well.

"Rei, Im here to check on you," Shinji was surprised at Rei's sudden talkativeness, "Are you feeling better?"

"I am in perfect health; the withdrawal symptoms have been dealt with and disappeared. I… thank you for your care." Rei said, smiling a little.

'Good, so she can actually have emotions now,' Shinji thought, and this was one of the few things that made him actually happy ever

since he lost her. "Rei, I… want to talk with you, I… don't feel like to talk to anybody, but I know I can talk to you, since… you… emmm… you are a good listener, and… gods you can be philosophical sometimes." Shinji chuckled, "and just call me Shinji. Please."

Rei smiled a little more, "Yes, Shinji-kun."

Shinji came into the apartment, and sat on the bed. "Rei, I've heard that you'll be living with us, right?"

"Yes, Shinji-kun. Captain Katsuragi had shown a great concern for me once she saw my living condition. She immediately arranged my change of accommodation," Rei blushed a little, feeling happy about the fact that so many people cared about her, "And I don't want to live here by myself anymore. I felt… lonely." 'New emotion registered: loneliness.'

"That's great! Rei, I was also feeling lonely ever since my father left me ten years ago," Shinji sighed, trying to push the bad memories off, "After… I became an EVA pilot, sometimes I didn't feel it anymore. I had you and Misato-san for company. After… Asuka… arrived, I felt… and now, she's… Im never… (sob)… gonna see her again…" Shinji trailed off, sobbing slightly.

Rei frowned, since she didn't understand his words. "Shinji-kun, what did you mean by 'never?'"

"Don't you know? That… that… she… died…"

"Shinji-kun, I don't understand."

"What do you mean that you don't understand?" Shinji suddenly raised his volume, feeling angry, "She's dead; Killed in Action! I'll never see her again!"

"But she's alive." Rei said, her voice still low and plain.

Shinji blinked. "Wha-what? I… I saw her die!"

"But when I was wandering in NERV headquarters today, I could feel the presence of her AT-Field," Rei said, sounding confused.

"A-AT-Field?" Shinji was much more confused than excited, 'Kaworu told me about something like everyone has their own AT-Field; I don't understand him. Isn't it true that only EVAs and Angels have AT-Fields? From my world I knew that Rei has angelic genes, maybe that's why she was able to feel other's AT-Fields?'

"Everyone that has a soul has an AT-Field; humans' AT-Fields are imperceptible to eyes. But her AT-Field was different than others; Hers was much stronger."

Shinji didn't need any more explanation. He sprinted out of Rei's apartment in a blink of eyes.

"As strong as an Angel," Rei said to the once again lonely apartment, "and… as strong as yours, Ikari Shinji-kun."

The distance between the NERV headquarters and Rei's apartment was not short, but Shinji kept running. He had already kept running about 3 miles at his top speed, and he didn't feel tired. He was blaming this on the adrenaline; he didn't want to think about it further, since he had something much more important to do. 'So Asuka's alive, at least according to Rei. But I wonder why Misato hadn't told me yet.' He quickly found an entrance to Geofront, and entered it using his NERV ID. Section 2 agents intercepted him, asking about where he wanted to go.

"NERV Headquarters!" Shinji said, "Please! I need to go there!"

Section 2 agents nodded, and took him on the train down to the pyramid.

Inside the train, Shinji was wandering around nervously; he felt so many emotions at once, he didn't know how to describe them. After a terribly long 45 minutes ride which felt like an eternity, they finally

reached the ground. It took another 10 minutes for them to catch a bus and ride it to the pyramid.

Shinji started running insanely again once he got off the bus. He entered the pyramid, pushing people away from his path. Just as he was about to be lost, he suddenly felt something. It was the same thing that he had felt during his encounter with Takuma; an extension of his body. And no, there was something else. Another presence beneath him. 'Is this… her AT-Field that Rei was talking about? Why am I able to sense it?' But that didn't matter that time; he quickly identified that the direction of the presence was near the First Cranial Nerve; the same room he had been to many times after the 15th Angel's attack in his timeline.

He kept running towards the elevator. He kept running down the stairs. He kept running down the hallway. He kept running.

He found Misato standing outside the First Cranial Nerve.

Misato was shocked to see Shinji there. 'How did he know about this? No one else except me, the Commander, sub-commander, and Doctor Akagi should know about Asuka's location.' "Shinji, what are you doing…"

"Get out of the way! Misato-san, I need to…" Shinji's heart nearly stopped as he heard a familiar voice coming out of the room.

"Baka-Shinji?"

AN: Annnnnd done! Has anyone seen that coming? I've put enough hints in this chapter about the true identity of Asuka and Shinji. And yes, I got the idea from a famous AsuShin Doujin. But it's not completely the same; you'll see what I mean later. LOL. The next chapter will take longer to upload. Probably half a week.

Revelations

AN: Hi guys, this chapter is mainly for clarification, and introduces certain settings. We'll move on with the story starting from the next chapter. Expect loads of WAFF from now on. Enjoy!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 7: Revelations

"Baka, don't cry. Shinji, (crack) I just (crack) want you to (crack) know, that… I'm ha(crack)ppy to have you (crack) in my life… Shinji… I (CRACK)… love you…"

Asuka trailed off as she saw the video feed became static; She felt her body was being squeezed everywhere. Sighing, she lowered her sync ratio; at least in this way, she could feel less pain before her death. She could feel the immense pressure being applied on the entry plug; thanks to the near incompressible nature of LCL, the entry plug wouldn't collapse just yet. However, it's just a matter of time; the heat itself could have fried her before the metal could crush her to death, anyway. She couldn't help but started crying; after all, she fucked up the second chance even harder than the first time, and she felt guilty because she had hurt Shinji by leaving him, and she thought it was her fault.

Unit 02 kept sinking. The viscosity of magma was very high, but that didn't slow down the sinking of Unit 02 very much. As the depth increases, the pressure built up very quickly. The sound of crushing metal was becoming increasingly large. The entry plug struggled to maintain its integrity, and Asuka closed her eyes.

Just as the bottom of the entry plug started bending inwards, Asuka suddenly felt another presence inside her; her survival instinct had taken over, and she refused to accept fate.

'I don't want to die… I don't want to die… I don't want to die…' Asuka shot open her eyes, which were glowing bright blue. She noticed that the imminent danger was the pressure; she raised her right hand, thinking about how she would push back against the pressure; just like what people would do if they are being squeezed, for example, a wall coming towards them.

She was dumbfounded to see faint orange octagons appeared in front of her, which effectively stopped the entry plug from collapsing.

"What the hell?" Asuka murmured, "An AT-Field? How… I'm not an Angel, am I? Or is this the side effect of time travel?" She didn't have any urge to unite with Adam, that she was sure of; but how could she produce an AT-Field if she's not an Angel?

But her logic soon took over; after all, whether she's an Angel or not, it felt good to not die, and that's what mattered most at that time.

Asuka's college-graduate-level-intelligent brain was running at full power once she was sure that this was real; she was still alive and not dreaming, and she was indeed producing an AT-Field to keep the entry plug from collapsing. She then thought, 'I wonder what other abilities I have; after all, if I'm really an Angel, I should have some unique abilities other than producing AT-Fields.' But she wasn't sure how she would discover them; it was her survival instinct, combined with her determination of refusal, that awoke her ability to project an AT-Field.

Asuka concentrated her mind; she could feel her AT-Field like an extension of her body, and she could kind of manipulate it just like using her limbs. Then she could feel something else; another extension of her body, but more distant.

She cleared her mind since she felt the temperature around her had become increasingly intolerable. 'Great, there is another problem to deal with, and apparently my AT-Field isn't blocking the heat. So it has come to this after all.' Sighing, she closed her eyes again…

Darkness engulfed her.

Asuka opened her eyes slowly, found herself sitting inside a train. Sitting across was another Asuka; or at least someone that looked exactly like her.

"Where… am I? Am I… dead? And who the hell are you? Why are you using my face?" Asuka felt more confusion than anger since what was happening was far beyond her comprehension.

"I am yourself. Or rather, I am part of you; your survival instinct. And no, you, or I rather, am not dead."

"What? I am I, not you! And what is this place? Am I dreaming or something?"

"This is *our* mental world, if using 'I' sounds weird. We have saved us from imminent death; we had used a sea of Dirac to get us out of the entry plug."

"Sea of Dirac? Isn't that's Leliel's thing? Does this make me Leliel in this world?" Asuka suddenly felt scared.

"No; Leliel here is still Leliel. We just happen to have its abilities; after all, we traveled to a parallel universe, and the use of the Sea of Dirac was inevitable. That's why we are able to manipulate it for our own interest."

"Well, I guess that makes sense…" Asuka sighed, her brain was still processing all this information. "If I could use this portal thing, does it mean that I can go anywhere I want, right now?" 'Shinji must've been so sad to lose me… I need to see him ASAP.'

"Technically yes; but it will be highly probable that we will be regarded as an Angel if we simply go back using our Angelic abilities."

"Ye, you're probably right…" Asuka said, thinking about her future, 'So now I have these Angelic powers, but Im not tempted to unite with Adam; Of course it's FUCKING AWESOME that I possess these powers.' Asuka couldn't help but smile since now she was literally the most powerful person in the world; her ego was flying out of the sky. 'But it will be hard for the others to accept my identity; Im not worried about Shinji, but how about Misato or NERV? Im sure Misato would shoot me in the head without hesitation if she sees my abilities; she hates Angels so much since they killed her dad. Nah, can't let them know. At least before all Angels are defeated. After that, it will be easier for them to accept a person with Angelic powers walking around them.'

"The threat of death was the thing that awoke our Angelic instinct, and it was… you, who saved yourself."

"I get it, me." Asuka found it amusing to talk to herself. "I guess I'll just wait for NERV to get Unit 02 out of the volcano; after all, they will want the core back. Then I'll make up a lie about an Angel with strange abilities that saved me, considering there is such an Angel which will appear later."

"You dont need to ask me for advice; I am you, after all. But certainly I could give you insights into your powers. And one more thing: you possess an S2 organ now. No need to eat, drink, or breathe, but you can still enjoy them."

"Wunderbar. Now, how the hell could I get the fuck out here? This place feels creepy!"

"You could do whatever you want with this place. Just concentrate; use it like using your limbs."

And Asuka did just that. She could feel the extension; and since she was aware of the extension, her control over it became more and more clear. But her brain was not used to deal with it yet; it never had to deal with something like this before. But human brains adapt

at a very rapid rate; Asuka's fast learning ability and her strong self-awareness had greatly helped her control her newly awoken powers.

Ritsuko waited impatiently beside Shinji and Asuka as they were holding each other on Asuka's hospital bed. "Hey you two lovebirds, I know Im ruining your emotional reunion here, but we still need to make sure Asuka is clear of contamination."

"What are you going to do to her?" Shinji reluctantly pulled away from the embrace, sounding irritated. "And errrr… we are not… emmm…"

Asuka blinked several times toward Shinji, who immediately got the idea and shut up.

"First we'll make sure she's physically okay, and then I'll give her a full brain scan to find any signs of mental contamination. After that, we'll… talk with her a little bit. Shinji, you know that it was virtually impossible that she could just come back safe and sound like this right? Sitting in an entry plug for seven days without life support should've killed her alone, not to mention the extreme heat and pressure there. We'll need to make sure that… she's not… an imposter, created by an Angel to distract us or something."

Shinji sighed, for sure he knew that this was virtually impossible; he never thought that he would see her again. But the reality is that she was there with him, and that's enough for him. Exchanging a look with Asuka, he stood up and left the ward. "Asuka, I'll be waiting for you outside."

Asuka smiled at him. "I know you will, Baka-Shinji."

SEELE 01: "Ikari, Ive been informed of the recovery of the Second Child and Unit 02's core. Unbelievable, but very appreciated. The scenario can proceed as intended."

Ikari: "Im aware of the impossibility of such occurrence, and instructed Doctor Akagi to Make sure the Second Child is not an imposter. I believe she'll do her job well."

SEELE 05: "But Unit 02 will be out of the rollout for a long period of time, you realize. The only thing recyclable now is the core."

Ikari: "That is correct. So, we still need Unit 03 and 04 to be transferred as soon as possible."

SEELE 06: "Ive heard that your NERV Berlin has been building a new type of Evangelion, featuring a dual-piloting system. What do you intend to do with it, Ikari?"

Ikari: "We plan to use Second and Third Children as the Pilot of Unit D. That is, should the Second Child be clear of anomalies."

SEELE 01: "Good. Unit 01 is too important to risk."

"Asuka, what was the last thing you remember before we got you out?" Ritsuko asked, Misato was standing right next to her.

Sitting across the table, Asuka pouted. "Well, I remembered hot, and being squeezed. I guess the link between me and my EVA wasn't severed at that time. Then I felt a strange sensation, something dark engulfed me. And I was in somewhere totally dark, I thought I was dead. And then… I think I heard someone talking to me."

Ritsuko frowned. 'So it was probably a real Angel who saved her. But what for? Shouldn't Angels be more than happy to kill one of our pilots? But the brain scan tells me nothing is wrong with her, and the DNA test perfectly matches our reserved samples as well.' "Asuka, what did it say to you? This can be very important for me to discover what really happened."

"Well, I think it told me something about it's lonely. Like it saved me so that it could have me all by itself. It was… using me as a

company." Asuka said, keeping her tone as plain as possible.

"Well, then how did you get out?"

"I don't remember ever getting out; I thought I was dreaming. And suddenly I woke up, and found myself inside the entry plug, hugged tightly by Misato. And she nearly suffocated me!" Asuka shot a glare at Misato, who returned an apologetic look.

"Interesting…" Ritsuko frowned. 'Asuka's testimony is close enough to my observation. But I still dont understand why the Angel just decided to give her back to us.' "Okay, That's good for now. Do you have any questions?"

"Yeah of course, like when can I go back home?!" Asuka said angrily, "Im getting sick of this place!"

"Are you so in a hurry to see Shin-chan?" Misato teased, "It's impressive to see you two have come so far in just three weeks…"

"MISATO!" Asuka's face blushed hard. "I just realized how much I like him after I thought I lost him forever… and thanks to me dying, Shinji apparently realized how much I meant to him as well!"

"Asuka, you can go back to the apartment very soon. But you'll be staying home for a few days. We still need to clear things up, since your file was deactivated, and you were registered… K.I.A. NERV Berlin has been informed as well. And I believe your friends at school think you are dead as well. So it'll take time to make things back to normal."

"Well, fair enough I guess… Imean, I thought I was dead as well…" Asuka trailed off, her expression was sad.

Shinji jumped from his seat once he heard the door of the interrogation room was opened. "Asuka!" He cried in joy as he saw a familiar redhead walking out of the room.

"Hi, Shinji. They say I can go home tonight, and… I want a big welcome back from death meal!" Asuka said; her smile beautiful and sincere.

"Sure thing, Asuka." Shinji said, "Im just glad to have you back. During those days when I thought I lost you, I was literally rotting in my bed. It was the news that Rei… she'll live with us now… that knocked me out of deep depression."

"So Rei will live next to us? That's good to hear. No one should ever live in that dump!"

"Yeah… I should've helped her earlier… and Asuka, you may be mad at me for this, but I told…" Shinji trailed off, afraid that Asuka would hate him for telling her friends that she died.

"It's okay, Shinji. Im not blaming on you. Heck, I myself thought I was dead. Now I couldn't help but be curious about the look Hikari will show once she sees me…" Asuka giggled but soon stopped as she found it inadequate to joke about something so serious. After all, Hikari was her friend. "So, what exactly did you tell them?"

"Well, I was crying over the table, and they figured it out by themselves. And then Sensei came in, he told the class that you were transferred back to Germany. I… I couldn't believe that after all that you've done for them, what you got was a fake announcement, so I had an outburst, yelled at Sensei, told the whole class that you died for them… and then I ran out of the class…"

Asuka was actually impressed. She never thought Shinji would go so far as yelling at Sensei and everyone in the class to just defend her effort, much less skip the school for it. 'That's the spirit I knew you've always had, Shinji.'

Hikari was in a bad mood today. Shinji had just told her two days ago that Asuka, her best friend, had been Killed in Action. The whole class was quieter than before. Shinji was still absent; so was Rei.

This got Hikari worried. She decided to check on Shinji with the Stooges after school.

"Hey Toji, Hey Kensuke." Hikari intercepted the Stooges at the school gate. "Im going to check on Shinji-kun today. Would you like to come with me?"

"Great class rep, cuz we were just thinking about the same thing." Toji smiled, "We care about Shin-man as well. Imean, I never liked the Red… Soryu-san before, but knowing that she..fought for me, for us, I feel kinda sorry for her…"

"Yeah, Toji. I agree with you. Imean, without her and Shinji the class seemed so quiet." Kensuke said.

Having made an agreement, the three of them started walking towards Shinji's apartment. No one said anything during the walk, as they were immersed in their own thoughts. Soon they arrived at the building, and were more confused than surprised to find Ayanami also there.

"Hello Ayanami-san, are you here to check on Shinji-kun as well?" Hikari greeted.

"Yes, Horaki-san," Rei replied, "and tomorrow will be the first day of me living here."

"Thats gud for you, Ayanami-san," Hikari smiled, "I bet Shinji-kun's in great need of company now."

"Shinji-kun and Soryu-san were very close to each other. I do not think I could replace her as his romantic partner." Rei said plainly.

Hikari, Toji, and Kensuke all blinked. "Ayanami-san, was… was that a joke?"

Rei chuckled, "Was it funny? I was trying to lighten the mood since I have noticed that you all have sad looks on your faces."

This time the three people actually giggled. "Good one, Ayanami-san." Toji said, "Shin-man and the Red Devil? Ha, I'll bet my Air Jordans to…"

"Suzuhara! Stop it! It's very inappropriate to say something like this behind people, especially when they are… never mind! Ayanami-san, let's go visit Shinji-kun now, alright?"

"Yes." Rei said, "Please follow me."

They entered the elevator and waited. After a Ding, they exited the elevator, and walked towards the Katsuragi Residence.

All four people stood in front of the door, three of them extremely nervous. Hikari pressed the doorbell, and heard a familiar voice saying "Coming!". But the three of them didn't recognize the voice at once; their brain ruled out a certain possibility automatically. Rei suddenly said, "It's good to have you visit Shinji-kun and Soryu-san here with me. I appreciate your company."

Toji, Kensuke, and Hikari blinked. "Visit Soryu-san? Ah, Rei, do you mean It's her memorial?"

Rei suddenly realized why the three of them were acting like before. Just as she was about to give them a warning, the door hissed open, and all of Hikari, Toji, and Kensuke's questions were answered.

Asuka, wearing a yellow T-shirt and a pair of blue short shorts, was standing right in front of them.

There were 5 seconds of total silence, as they were simply staring at each other.

Toji reacted first. "GHOOOOOOOOOOOOST!" He yelled out loud, the whole building shook as he was so stunned to the extent that his brain completely shut down, his reflex taking over.

Kensuke simply rolled his eyes and fell.

Hikari, on the other hand, was more shocked than happy to see Asuka, safe and sound, unscratched, standing right in front of her. She slowly raised her right hand, and caressed Asuka's left cheek. Asuka's face twitched at contact, but she quickly raised her both hands, and took hold of Hikari's left hand.

"Asu… ka?" Hikari murmured. Toji fell on his butt as well, simply staring at the Red Ghost.

"Gah, what an anticlimax way to meet you guys." Asuka said, "Yes, Hikari, It's me. The great Soryu Asuka Langley. Annnnnd Im not a ghost, Jock Stooge! I guess Im just too hard to get rid of! Apparently Satan was scared by the Red Devil and threw me right back! Ha!" Asuka said, smiling.

Hikari finally recovered from the shock and her logic took over. She lashed forward and gave Asuka a tight embrace. Asuka was more than happy to return it.

"Asuka… It's really you… Im glad you're okay… Shinji-kun said that you… you…" Hikari trailed off with a sob.

"Ah, he's just a Baka. He got too emotional and outed the wrong info to you!" Asuka said, "Now, lets get inside. That Baka is making some dinner. Not as good as the welcome home one, but still good. I can ask him to prepare for more people if you guys are willing to stay here for dinner!"

"I'd love to, Asuka-chan." Hikari smiled widely, tears in her eyes. She looked back at Toji and Kensuke, the former had just stood up, while the latter was still lying on the ground. Sighing, Asuka helped them to get Kensuke inside.

"… I killed the Angel, but it severed my cable and I began falling down. Baka-Shinji went after me, but I was too deep for him to reach in time. And… just as I thought I was about to die, something happened to me and I was teleported out. And… I think I fell asleep.

Then I woke up in the entry plug, Misato hugging me tightly." Asuka was telling her story to her friends enthusiastically. Toji and Kensuke were just recovering from the shock, but Hikari was very excited to listen how her friend had killed an Angel and came back from near death.

"Wow, that sounds… cool. Asuka, we were all so sad to hear that… emmm, but now Im just soooo happy to see you fine! And god damn Shinji yelled at Sensei like a maniac… but it was awesome!" Hikari said, smiling.

"Yeah, yeah, that Baka just couldn't… woooooo that smells sooooo goooood, Shinji!" A strong smell of delicious food came out of the kitchen.

"Ah, Asuka, Im making some… I believe it's called Sauerbraten, and pancakes. It's almost done. Im serving the pancakes now." Shinji said, carrying three pancakes at a time, and served all six people with delicious pancakes.

"Wunderbar. I like German food!" Asuka exclaimed. Shinji smiled, "Asuka, as long as you like it, then I can make it."

"Jeez, Shin-man, you guys sound like a couple," Toji said with a smirk.

Both Asuka and Shinji blushed, "Shut up, Toji!" They said in unison.

"But you guys look so cute together!" Hikari said, "You should totally go on a date."

"Well, it's not like… we haven't… yet…" Shinji stammered.

"Shinji! Let's go get some sodas from the grocery store! We'll be right back!" Asuka interrupted Shinji and stood up, grabbing his wrist and dragged him out of the apartment. Hikari, Toji, Kensuke, and Rei exchanged knowing looks, and continued eating their food.

"… Asuka! Slow down!" Shinji was barely catching up with Asuka, and he was wondering what was so important that Asuka had to drag him out of the apartment and discuss alone.

Asuka found an alleyway and signaled Shinji to follow. Once they were sure that no one was watching them, Asuka turned around to face Shinji, "Shinji, I… I want to ask you something. And… I want to tell you something."

Shinji felt a chill ran down his spine. He had never seen Asuka's expression looked so serious, and her eyes were saying that she was afraid. "Yes, Asuka. What… do you want to know?"

"… Shinji, you said in that volcano, that… you… need me, you can't lose me. What did you mean by that?"

Shinji was taken aback by the question. "Wha… I mean exactly what they sound like, Asuka. I don't want to lose you; like I said, you are important to me."

"But we've only met each other for about three weeks that time, yet you sounded like I was the most important person to you."

Shinji blinked. 'Why did she say that? Was she trying to trick me into something?' "Asuka, I… errr, I didn't know how much I… wanted from you, how much I needed you, until I thought I was about to lose you forever. It was… I don't know, Asuka. I thought you are better than me at dealing with emotions." 'How can I tell her that I fell in love with her for months already?'

Asuka swallowed, "Shinji… let's put it in this way. Do you… like me?"

'That's the answer she's been waiting for. I knew it.' "Asuka, of course I like you! I think… emmm, I like you in a way that's different from Rei, or Misato, or Toji and Kensuke… If you know what I mean…"

Asuka smiled widely. "Good to hear, Shinji. And… I like you too." Asuka blushed. 'Wunderbar, it seems like me and Shinji will be together much earlier this time.'

Shinji smiled as well, "Asuka, Im glad to hear that. I… we… are we, *that thing* now?"

"Ahem, maybe. Now, let's get some sodas and do back home. I still have something to tell you later."

Shinji got out of the shower and went straight into his room. Singing, he closed the door, laid down on his bed, and started listening to his SDAT. Suddenly the door was slid open, Asuka standing right there. "Shinji, Misato's not coming home tonight. That leaves two of us alone here. And… I still have something to tell you. Now, get up and meet me in the dining room."

"Ah yeah, sure." Shinji got up and walked to the dining area, Asuka sitting on a chair around the table, her finger tapping the table. Shinji found another chair and sat down. "Asuka, what is it?"

Asuka swallowed hard, "Shinji… promise me first… that you won't hate me… no matter what I tell you…"

Shinji coughed, "Wow Asuka, you sound so serious… I promise you Asuka, I won't hate you. I said I… really like you. And I won't leave you."

Asuka made a weak smile. "It's a good thing that I trust you, Baka." She took a deep breath, "Shinji, listen carefully. I… I think… I… am… I have the… power of Angels."

Shinji blinked. He couldn't believe what he had just heard. Asuka, on the other hand, her face darkened as she saw the look on Shinji's face. "Listen Shinji, I… I'm not going to hurt you! I… I'm not going to do what Angels do! Im not an Angel! Please Shinji… don't leave me…"

Shinji swallowed hard, and took a deep breath. He reached out his hand to grab Asuka's who immediately returned with a death grip. "Asuka, I don't hate you, and I won't leave you, even if you are… and you are not, that Im sure of." 'What the hell was that? Asuka has Angelic powers? That's something completely new to me. And I guess that's the real reason she came out of the volcano unscratched. And speaking of Angelic powers, I… Im afraid that I also have them, since I could feel the presence of other's AT-Field, and that also explains why I just don't get tired, or I was able to beat the Takuma jerk like flipping a coin.' "Asuka, I… listen to me, you just said something very secret to me. And I think I should tell you something as well." Seeing the expression on Asuka's face had softened, Shinji took another deep breath. "Asuka… Im… errr… from the future."

Asuka gasped. 'Wait, he's from the future? Just like me? Well that explains a lot of things… like why we were already so synced the first day we met… and does this mean that he has Angelic powers like me as well?' "Shinji… if what you said is true, then I believe you should also have Angelic powers, since… Im just like you."

Shinji wasn't surprised anymore; he had already half-expected it. "Ha… what does that make us into? Two time travelers, just to meet another in the same universe, and…"

"Shinji, now I get it all! You love me now because in your world, you've been in love with me already!" Asuka giggled, "Aw, how romantic…"

Shinji also smiled, "exactly, Asuka. Ive been in love with you for months. Now I guess this means that you've been in love with me for a while as well?"

"Ahem, of course, Baka-Shinji!" Asuka smiled, "Oh gods, these things happened so fast… I think this is enough for today, Baka-Shinji. I want to go to sleep." She stood up and grabbed Shinji's wrist, walking directly into her room.

"Asuka, what are you doing?"

"Anta Baka? We'll sleep together, can't you see? I mean, we've been doing this for months already! And I don't treat you differently from my Shinji!"

Shinji sighed, "I love you, Asuka. But it's not like we can just do whatever we want. What if Misato sees us tomorrow? Maybe she'll separate us, 'you are still teenagers' and all that!"

"I don't care about what others think! I only want you, Shinji. I… lost you before, and I don't want to lose you again! I… I want all of you! You… we are the only ones who could understand each other!"

"You have a point, Asuka. But it's not like Im going anywhere; I also want to be with you. But first, we'll need to make people actually believe that we indeed love each other, right? Not just some horny teens seeking pleasure or something."

"Yeah, you're probably right…" Asuka sighed, "We'll need to make this more believable. After all, in this world we've only known each other for a month. Annnd… It's still so hard to believe that we… emmm, just happen to be in the same universe, right?"

"Asuka, I think we can talk about more details tomorrow. We both need to digest this information, don't we?"

"Of course I do, Baka. You can go sleep now."

"So… I guess I'll go sleep in my room?" Shinji said, "Emmm, actually… I think there's one thing we could do right now."

Shinji leaned forward, and Asuka immediately understood him and pulled him close. Their lips met. Asuka hugged Shinji tight, who was more than happy to return it. Their tongues deep into each other's mouths, enjoying the sensation created by electronic pulses running through their bodies. They also enjoyed the sensation of their bodies pressed together, feeling so warm and comfortable. After 10 minutes

or so, they finally reluctantly pulled back, both blushing and breathing hard.

"Wow… I didn't know that I've missed those so much…" Shinji said, satisfaction on his face.

"Me too, Baka. And I'm also looking forward to cuddles. Ive missed those hard. I never had any nightmares when sleeping next to you, Shinji." Asuka walked into her room, closing the door. "And goodnight, my dearest Baka."

"Ja mein Liebling. Guten Nacht."

Rei watched the movers packing up her stuff and loading them into a truck. Today was the day that she'll be moving into the apartment next to Katsuragi Residence. Although she was looking forward to it, she couldn't help but feel a little bit nervous, due to the fact that she could feel Asuka and Shinji's AT-Fields like the Angels. 'Observation: Asuka and Shinji both possess AT-Fields as strong as an Angel. Does that make them Angels? Observation: Asuka and Shinji had killed six Angels in total. Asuka and Shinji have never shown any urge to unite with Adam or Lilith, even during the times they were deep down in the Geofront. Conclusion: Asuka and Shinji possess angelic powers, but they do not wish to do what Angels do. Observation: I have angelic genes, thus angelic powers. I do not wish to unite with Adam or Lilith. Conclusion: Shinji and Asuka are just like me, they are Nephilim.' Rei felt satisfied with her conclusion, and get into the SUV which was here to pick her up.

"Rits, what do you think about all this?" Misato yawned; she had just finished the mountain of paperwork. "Asuka's recovery was such a surprise; but also kind of disturbing. Imean, an Angel had saved her? That just sounds so creepy."

"Misato, trust me, Im just as confused as you are." Ritsuko sighed, "however, her testimony was in accordance with my observation.

Now the only question would be why did the Angel send her back to us. If according to Asuka, the Angel took her as its company. Then why gave her back? I have a theory, a dark one…"

"I guess you are trying to say the Angel had possessed Asuka's mind so that it could commence a surprise attack?" Misato snorted, "well if it's true then why did it not do so when we put Asuka in First Cranial Nerve? That would be a perfect time to attack since it was deep down in NERV headquarters. Besides, we all know that her brain scan tells us that she's perfectly fine; maybe the Angel who kidnapped her just happen to so kind to give her back to us."

"No, that's not my theory," Ritsuko said, which drew the Misato's attention immediately. "What I was trying to say is…" Ritsuko paused. 'I can't let her know about Rei, yet. She's not cleared from knowing this.' "Maybe it was God's act."

Misato blinked. Then she laughed out loud, "Hahahahahaha, Rits, nice one. Hahahaha…"

Ritsuko was satisfied with her fast reaction. She decided to change the subject for now, to distract Misato from wanting to know so much. "So, do you still love him?"

Misato's expression immediately clouded. "What the hell are you talking about? He's just a jerk! I was just being dumb! There's nothing between us anymore!"

"Well, your reaction certainly tells otherwise…" Ritsuko teased. Misato huffed; she felt there's no point in staying here anymore. She stood up and left in a hurry.

Shinji opened his eyes, and found himself extremely relaxed. After all, he had a wonderful dream last night. 'So Asuka and I are both from other timelines, and we love each other. That's simply great.' He quickly got up and changed; he wanted to talk to her badly,

although he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to compose himself. He opened the door of his bedroom, and smelt something delicious.

Asuka was making breakfast. She was wearing an apron, singing happily as she flipped the bacon using a slice.

"Morning Asuka." Shinji yawned, "Thanks for making me breakfast."

Asuka turned around and smiled when she saw Shinji. "Morning, Baka. I guess it's about time for me to show you my great cooking skills!"

Shinji chuckled. "Well, from my experience, you were a great cook."

"What do you expect from the great Asuka Langley Soryu?" Asuka smiled, "And… I really want to talk to you, Shinji… about… our stories."

"Im not sure about it, tho… Since, emm, I guess we both ended up dead in the other's timeline… it wasn't a pleasant memory."

"Don't worry, Baka. We have each other right now. And you know what's even better? Now that we have these powers, we can definitely do better than in our own timeline. And maybe things can turn out good this time. I… want to be with you forever, Shinji."

"Until the end of the world, Asuka. I want to be with you forever as well. I… now in this world, I don't really think anyone could understand us better than ourselves…"

"Very right, but even if back in my timeline, I still loved you as much," Asuka said, finishing making the breakfast. "Now take your food and meet me at the table."

Shinji grabbed his breakfast and sat down beside Asuka. "Asuka… I… since we know about the future, I think we should make plans about incoming Angels. The next one is Matariel… the one who attacked during a power outage."

"Yeah, and I believe it will attack about a month later." Asuka said, "We can deal with this one pretty easily… I guess I'll just act as meatshield again, and you'll use the rifle to kill it."

"No! Asuka, I know it hurts! I don't want you to do it again!"

"Anta Baka? What do you propose then?"

"Well, I could be the meatshield this time… or rather, we could simply start shooting it right away, since the last time it was me who dropped the rifle. Now that we know its abilities, we certainly could simply shoot it to death as soon as we get out from the tunnel."

"Well, you are not as Baka as I thought…" Asuka smiled, "But what about SEELE? Angels are no match for us now that we have these powers. And SEELE was the real threat!"

"Yeah… and MP EVAs… I guess we'll deal with them later…" Shinji flinched at the memory of Asuka's Unit 02 being torn apart. "Asuka… In my world, something very bad happened to you…"

"Then don't think about it! Im here now, right? I want to talk about other stuff, tho. Im really curious about… Like… when did we get together, in your timeline?"

Shinji chuckled, "Well, it was after Zeruel. I was absorbed into Unit 01's core, and you were worried to death. After I came out, you just told me something like don't ever do that to me again. And I said I won't leave you again, and… we kissed…" Shinji blushed a little, "What about you?"

"Well, remember the day I asked you for a kiss because I was bored? I pinched your nose and kissed you, and you pinned me on the table. Then we just held each other… and everything happened naturally…" Asuka also blushed, pleasant memories resurfacing.

"Well, you know what Asuka. In my world, you also asked me for a kiss that night. But instead of holding you, I did nothing. I simply

froze. I was suffocating and pushed you back…" Shinji said with an apologetic look, "Sorry…"

Asuka huffed. "That would've been bad, Shinji. I risked my heart for that. I don't know what I would do, but I would definitely think you rejected me."

"Well, we still got together after that…" Shinji sighed. "Asuka, what do you think about our powers? I could feel my AT-Field; like my other limb or something. I think it was awoken by my anger… that day I went to find you in the ward, Takuma and a bunch of mobsters blocked me in a small alley…"

"Takuma? you mean that jerk from the basketball team?" Asuka interrupted, an evil grin on her face, "I told you about how I broke his dirty fingers… I bet you did something worse… no, *better,* didn't you?"

Shinji smiled, "Yeah… He said something very wrong… he said he wanted to… enjoy you in front of me… and I… punched him. He just flew away and crushed a metallic trash box. Gods that was satisfying…"

Asuka couldn't help but feel disgusted at Shinji's words. "Mein Gott… That's so disgusting… Shinji, Im glad that you served him right." Taking a deep breath, Asuka continued, "Well, Shinji. What do you think about our powers? Imean, the AT-Fields and all that."

"I think it has something to do with Instrumentality… Asuka, you experienced Instrumentality in your timeline as well, right?"

"Yeah, and I was the fucking trigger! I saw all those memories!" Asuka shook her head, trying to clear herself from those images, "Imean, once the Instrumentality is completed, whoever was the trigger basically became gods, right?"

"I guess… but I also think I saw Rei there… I think it was her who send me there…"

"Well, I was sent here by her as well. What a strange coincidence. Hey, Baka, you said she's your sister. What made you say that?"

"Well, from Instrumentality I learned that she's a clone using my mother's and Lilith's DNA. So she's half Angel as well."

Asuka blinked. That was something new to her. "Shinji… I think now I know why we both saw her there… She was the one who triggered Third Impact… she was the real God…"

Shinji felt a chill ran down his spine. 'Why hadn't I thought about that before? And it makes so much sense.' "Yeah, I'm afraid that you're right, Asuka…"

"Of course I am, Baka!" Asuka pouted, "So this time, we'll need to help her. She was like a damn doll… maybe if we get her off the drugs, she will make her own decision and reject Third Impact…"

Shinji nodded. After all, now they have a plan.

Rei stood in front of the door of Katsuragi Residence, and pressed the doorbell. "Coming!" Several seconds later, the door hissed open, and Shinji came into view. "Ah, Hi, Rei! Nice to see you!"

Rei made a faint smile. "Nice to see you too, Shinji-kun. Ive finished packing my personal belongings and delivered them here. I am moving in today. I am happy to be able to live with you and Asuka-chan."

"We are happy to have you over here as well, Rei." Shinji smiled, "errr… are those boxes your stuff? I can help you with those if you want…"

"That will be appreciated, Shinji-kun. Thank you for your kindness."

Shinji called out Asuka to help Rei move her stuff, who was willing to help. After all, Rei didn't have too many things. They finished their

job rather quickly.

Rei decided to spend her afternoon with her friends. The three pilots just watched some TV together, gossiped around, and eventually went to do their respective entertainments. Asuka just started reading mangas, while Shinji listened to his SDAT, and Rei was simply reading.

"Im home!" Misato announced, and went directly for a beer.

"Welcome home!" Shinji and Asuka said in unison.

"Oh, Hi there, Rei." Misato greeted the blue-haired girl, "How do you feel about your first day here?"

"Hello, Captain Katsuragi. Today was rather pleasant. I have my friends here who care about me. Spending time with them makes me feel happy. I do not wish to be alone again."

"Well, that's good to hear. Rei, now you just live next door. You are always welcome here. Here, take this." Misato said, handing a keycard to Rei, who gladly accepted. She truly felt happy for her kids at that time.

AN: Another short chapter. Just to make things clear. Starting from the next one we'll go back to canon-like, and things will move forward.

The days before Tokyo-3 Stood Still

AN: Things are going back to normal. Expect loads of WAFF.

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 8: The days before Tokyo-3 stood still

It's been a week since Rei had moved in. She spent most of her time with Asuka and Shinji in Misato's apartment, and she truly enjoyed it. She was becoming better at identifying and dealing with her emotions. Today she had a scheduled scan of her brain, and Misato had left early to catch up on the paperwork. That leaves Shinji and Asuka alone in the apartment.

"… emmm… so warm. Comfy." Asuka murmured as she snuggled closer to Shinji, who was having his arms wrapped around the redhead.

"Asuka…" Shinji whispered into her ears, "I really love doing this… but I think it's time to get up."

"Baka… dun wanna. No school. No sync tests. No wonder girl. No Misato. No Angels. Just you and me. We don't get much of this happening." Asuka said, gently kissed on Shinji's lips.

"Yeah… but it's already 9 am, and Im kinda hungry." Shinji said as he got up from the bed, "Im going to make some breakfast… and I think we can do something together today…"

Asuka turned around and smiled, "Are you taking me on a date?"

"Well, yes…" Shinji smiled back, "You were right… we don't get peaceful days like today without anything to worry about. And I'd like to make use of it."

"Great… you are getting better at dealing with girls…" Asuka got up as well and yawned. "Now, let's make something to eat, Baka. I'll help you with the dishes."

The sun was high in the sky, which was pure blue with scattered clouds. Shinji and Asuka walked along the streets; they decided to go to Arcade first. The arcade was full of people as usual, so Shinji and Asuka just found a quiet corner in the Arcade and played whatever games' there.

"Ha, I beat you again, Shinji!" Asuka exclaimed, the screen in front of her flickering a score of 20 -2. It was a game like mortal combat; Asuka was always good at these things.

"So much fun to bully the weak…" Shinji murmured, which got him a slap from Asuka at the back of his head, "Ouch! I'm sorry!"

"Baka! I don't want to bully anyone! I want a fair fight!" Asuka huffed, looking around. "I know you are not good at these fighting games. How about that one? That looks cool." Shinji turned around and followed Asuka's gaze just to find a racing game.

"I guess…" Shinji walked to the machine. There were two seats, one was for the red race car, and another was for the blue race car.

"Yes! They have a red one! I'll take the red car; you know I've always liked red." Asuka happily and sat down on the seat. Shinji sighed; he knew he would never win against her, not only in games. After about 3 minutes of racing, unsurprisingly, Asuka won again by a large margin.

"Yeeeah! That was awesome! Not as awesome as piloting an Eva, but still cool!" Asuka cried in joy, which worried Shinji a bit. "Asuka, you can't just yell in public about our identity! It can cause unwanted consequences!"

"Who cares? I'm not some helpless girl." Asuka pouted, "Now Im kinda hungry. Let's go find somewhere to eat lunch!"

Shinji searched in his mind about any places he went with Asuka in his timeline. He then decided that the Italian restaurant would suffice. "Asuka, there is an Italian…"

"I know that place; I've been there with you a lot," Asuka smiled, "I guess it's the same for you, Baka."

"Yeah, you're right." Shinji blushed a little, "Let's not waste any time." They got up from the seats and exited the Arcade.

As they were approaching the restaurant, they suddenly saw someone familiar. "Hey, Shinji. Look who they are." She pointed her finger in the direction of two familiar figures; an evil smile appeared on her face. Shinji looked in the direction, just to be dumbfounded. "Are they… Toji and Hikari? Wha…"

"I don't remember they started dating so early…" Asuka smirked, "Maybe this time our relationship helped them a lot…" Asuka signaled Shinji to stay for a while and sneaked closer to them. She held her breath and walked as light as possible.

"… thanks Toji. It's really sweet for you to come out with me." Hikari said, her face blushing.

"N-no problem, Hikari. I-Im, errr, happy to do this with you." Toji stammered, his face also blushing.

Asuka was just behind Hikari. She lightly patted Hikari's shoulder. Hikari thought it was Toji who did that, but as she found out that Toji's both hands were resting on his sides, she looked around.

"Ahhh!" Hikari gasped in surprise as her face mere inches away from Asuka's. "Errr, Asuka-chan? What are you doing here?"

Toji also noticed the redhead's presence; he was very embarrassed since he realized that Asuka would never let him hear the end of it.

"My, my, Hikari, hooked up with the Jock Stooge already? Much faster than I expected…" Asuka giggled, "What got this dense monkey head to notice that you like him?"

Hikari blushed hard, "Asuka! We are not…"

"Meh, you guys are really no fun. C'mon, you are on a public date! What, if I was not to catch you, you are gonna hide it or what?"

"Asuka, it's just that…" Hikari paused for a moment, not sure whether to say what she was about to say. "Emmm, that you… almost… can't come back, and seeing Shinji like that… that… made me realize, you don't know what you have until you lose it… then I thought I should really, really grab on what I want as soon as possible. I know we are not like you guys who have to fight monsters, but I still think I should really enjoy life as much as possible… so… I made some initiatives."

Asuka tensed up as her memory of Mount Asama resurfaced when hearing Hikari's words. But she relaxed quickly as she realized that it was all in the past. Now that she was truly happy to see her best friend enjoying her life. "Im glad you think like that, Hikari. Meh, Jock stooge, you are so not a real man! Who would let a girl take the initiative!"

Toji was provoked, "Hey! I… what about you and Shin-man?" Toji quickly turned the subject, trying to hide his embarrassment, "You guys are dancing around each other longer than us! Who are you to tell me what I did wrong!"

Asuka was surprised that the Jock was actually able to push back, "Ahem, I have to agree that Baka-Shinji was denser than you, but…" an evil grin appeared on her face, "what do you think is the reason that Im here today, and dressed like this?" Asuka swirled around, showing off her outfit. She was wearing a light-blue skirt and tank top, which covered a pink t-shirt, and white socks; she also wore a violet choker. In other words, a perfect choice for a date.

"Wow, I haven't noticed that… you look gorgeous…" Hikari paused for a moment to just appreciate Asuka's beauty, who smiled widely as her ego was boosted *hard* . "I guess you are here for a date? No other reasons I can think of… and Shinji would be the one… but where is he? Doesn't he live with you?"

"Alright, Baka. You can come out." Asuka turned around and said to the bushes behind her. Shinji swiftly came out, smiling sheepishly. "Er, hi, Horaki-san, hi, Toji."

Toji's expression unreadable. "Man… you guys are really… Shin-man and the Red Devil…"

"I knew it! You guys just looked like a married couple!" Hikari exclaimed, "So… how long have you been doing this?"

"Emmm, since I got out from *there* ." Asuka swallowed, "Basically the same reason as you and the monkey here, we thought we should enjoy the life while we still can…"

"Aw, Im so happy for you guys! By the way, what were you going to do?"

"We were to have lunch at this restaurant." Shinji pointed at the Italian restaurant beside them, "emmm, you guys may join us if you want."

"I'd love to, but isn't this place a bit expensive?" Hikari said, "Toji and I were to head back home…"

"Not a problem! We can pay for you! We pilots get tons of salary, but it's not like we can spend them anywhere! Cmon, Hikari! We'll have so much fun!" Asuka said, grabbing Hikari's hand.

"But… it's still…"

"Just listen to her, Horaki-san," Shinji interrupted, "We want to do it; Asuka's right, we will have fun together."

Asuka smiled, "That's right, Baka." Turning around to look at Toji, "Now, monkey head, why don't you say something?"

Toji stammered; he wasn't proficient at dealing with relationships, much less accepting such a gorgeous offer. "S-Soryu-san, I-I'd like to. Hikari, cmon, they are just being nice. I don't know about the Red Devil, but if Shin-man here says we can join them, then Im in for it."

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean?!" Asuka raised her volume, "It's not like Im being nice to you! Only because you're my best friend's boyfriend!"

"Im having enough of you, redheaded bitch! I don't know what Shinji sees in you!" Toji shouted back.

"Are you gonna stop and have lunch or what?" Shinji interrupted, sounding irritated. The last thing he wanted was to observe a fight between his girlfriend and his best friend.

Asuka and Toji stared at each other for a few seconds. Toji surrendered and looked away first, while Asuka huffed triumphantly.

Shinji led the way into the restaurant. The waiter stopped them at the counter. "Hey kids, we don't have time treating children here."

Asuka, although she had dealt with the exact same situation before, she still decided to go the hard way as she was irritated by the waiter's rude attitude. "We are not kids! And if you don't let us in, I'll make sure to give some special attention to your little place with my Unit 02 during the next fight!"

The waiter blinked. He was not sure whether to be angry or sorry. Shinji noticed the look on his face and took out his NERV ID to show him. "Errr, sorry. But we really want to eat here; I think this will convince you."

The waiter took his NERV ID and inspected it. After he was sure it's real, he handed the card back, his hand shivering. He had had no

idea what he could get him into. "Er, I'm truly sorry to cause this inconvenience to you, Mister Ikari. Please accept my apology." He then led the kids to the table that's at the best position in the restaurant, "You may sit here. Snacks will be served in a minute." The waiter walked off in a hurry, clearly embarrassed. After all, he almost ruined the restaurant, both physically and its reputation.

Asuka huffed, "Why it always has to come to this? Why couldn't people just show more respect to us? What's so bad about looking young?" 'And that's why Ive always wanted to grow up.' She thought.

"Tadaima!" Misato announced once she walked into her apartment. She was supposed to work at NERV late today, but now she just wanted to push everything work-related aside since she was so tired. She didn't get the normal "Welcome home" from the kids, and she was curious. Misato entered the dining area. The table was clear, dishes were done. Everything was organized and tidy. But no sign of Asuka and Shinji.

"Where could they be going?" She murmured to herself. She then picked up the phone; maybe asking about Section 2 would be a good idea.

"Agent Yamada." Section 2 agent said.

"This is Captain Katsuragi. I want to know the location of the pilots."

"Yes, Captain. Now the Second and the Third Children are having lunch in the Italian Restaurant with two of their classmates."

Misato smiled. She had always wanted to push those two together; now, it seems like her job was done. However, she couldn't help but feel a bit of sadness. After all, those two mentally screwed kids could find their happiness; what did she have? 'I wish I could find someone to be with as well…' She shook her head as the image of Kaji appeared in her head. 'Why is he still in my head? He's just a jerk. I

don't want him.' Misato sighed; she grabbed a beer from the fridge and emptied it in one go.

The sunset of Tokyo-3 was extraordinary. When seeing the sight of the golden light from the sun shot through and scattered behind the skyscrapers, one would truly feel a moment of peace in their heart. Shinji and Asuka sat on the hill that Misato had taken him to after his first battle, trying to enjoy the feeling of happiness and peace.

"Shinji… hey, Baka!" Asuka tried to get attention from her boyfriend. Seeing Shinji turned his head to her, she continued, "You know… I am so happy to have you with me… and I feel so lucky to be given a second chance… I… I fucked up first time hard…" She trailed off, wanting to get some reaction from Shinji.

Shinji, on the other hand, was not really in the mood of talking about their pasts. He simply wanted to enjoy his time alone with Asuka, the girl he loved who loved him back. "Asuka, I… I really don't want to talk about this right now… you know that I am really happy to have you as well, and I simply want to enjoy my life with you."

Asuka wasn't stopping, tho. She talked when she was ready, and when she was ready, she won't stop talking. "Shinji, that's our pasts, and we need to face them. And whatever you had experienced, you now have me here to support you, right? I just want to…"

Shinji interrupted her. He knew Asuka so well to think that she would just stop talking. And he also knew that Asuka was right; there's no running away from their pasts. In both timelines, it involved them opening up to each other and their traumatic childhoods to get them together. As for now, they would need to get past their pasts. It was different from just soaking in his own thoughts; now that he had Asuka beside him, who would constantly remind him of reality. "You were torn to shreds, and I couldn't do anything but watch." Shinji said in a plain tone.

Asuka gasped. She never thought about anything so graphic; she thought killing every single person on earth and watch their memories was traumatic enough. But now it's obvious that something much worse could happen. She thought about the image of Shinji being torn apart in her head and immediately regrated it. Asuka swallowed hard and took a deep breath. "Mein Gott… Shinji, Im sorry… I didn't know… I thought my experience was bad enough…" No need to say, she reached out her hand and took hold of Shinji's, who squeezed her hand lightly to say 'Don't worry. Im still here.'

"It's okay, Asuka." Shinji sighed, "You fought well against mass production Evas. You destroyed them all. But they cheated, and they got back up. You were out of power. The MP Evas impaled me using the replicas of the Lance of Longinus, and they made me watch… it was all my fath… Commander Ikari's plan." He took a deep breath, "this is something we have to deal with. They were using you to control me. And your last use would be to completely drive me insane, so that I would destroy the world as they wanted."

Asuka knew about SEELE's secret plan to end the world. She experienced it herself. "Shinji…" Asuka felt a surge of anger shot up inside her body. After all of those years of training and piloting, she had always thought that she should be the most valuable pilot among all. In the end, she was the one always as expendable as a damn tool. "In my timeline, you got absorbed into the core again when fighting that Kaworu jerk. And I had to pilot Unit 01 when the invasion happened… so it was all coincidental that I was the trigger of instrumentality." She sighed again, realizing how small the chance was for her to be the actual trigger. If that didn't happen, she would be in the soup of LCL right now. "Shinji… I'd really like some cuddles right now."

They simply held each other for 20 minutes, enjoying each other's warmth. The sun was about to disappear below the hills, and they finally decided to get up and go home. "Cmon, Baka. Let's go home. Misato would be home very soon."

"Tadaima!" Shinji and Asuka both said in unison when they entered their apartment. Rei was absent, supposedly some medical checks at NERV. They saw no one in the living room or dining area, and they almost immediately started making out. However, just five minutes later, they heard the bathroom door sliding open.

"Oh shit!" They immediately separated their kiss; Asuka flung over to the couch, grabbed some random manga, and started reading. Shinji simply pulled out his SDAT and plugged the earbuds in. Misato came out; seeing her kids red-faced, and in messy clothes, she immediately realized what has happened. She decided to tease them a bit. "Well, well, it's so hot today, don't you think?"

"Ah, yes, Misato-san, what do you want for dinner?" Shinji said, trying hard to divert the subject.

"Hmmm, ramen is fine for me, nothing fancy. Shin-chan, I know you're very busy already trying to feed 4 mouths, and I'm sure you don't wanna feed one more mouth 10 months later, do you?" Misato said in an evil grin.

"hey! Just what the hell are you implying by that!" Asuka's face turned redder.

"Ahh, nothing. Just be sure to sue protection." Misato teased, running away from some potential undesirable physical contact.

Just like she thought, Asuka shot up from the couch and yelled, "PERVERT! HENTAI!" and started chasing Misato, her fist clenching.

Shinji just sat there and watched the whole scene. "I'll never hear the end of it…"

Although she had always hated it, it was time for Asuka to go back to school; starting from Monday, which would be today. Shinji had already returned to school for a week; the rumors about his outburst

that day hadn't died down yet. Every time people saw him, they shot him sympathetic looks; but they were surprised to see that Shinji was acting very happily. Why wasn't he sad?

Shinji and Asuka put on their shoes and announced their departure. On the way to school, Asuka couldn't help but started worrying. "Hey, Shinji! Im kinda excited to see the look on our classmates' faces when I showed up in class!"

Shinji chuckled, "Well, I still remember how Toji and Kensuke reacted…"

"Hmpf, those two stooges just overreacted. They were your friends, anyway. They probably didn't like me, but they certainly cared about you!" Asuka pouted, putting her arms at the back of her head. "Actually, I'm more excited to introduce my boyfriend to the class! So that the girls wouldn't harass you anymore!"

"Asuka, they weren't harassing me anymore after my outburst. Maybe they thought approaching me just after some traumatic event would simply make me hate them. But now that you are back, and Im really glad to tell everyone in the class that I have a girlfriend."

As they walked closer to the school, they were encountering more and more of their schoolmates. Most of them were simply curiously looking, probably more at the fact that Shinji and Asuka were holding hands than seeing a supposedly dead person. Some of them were jaw-dropped, stood still, and staring hard at the duo. They were believers of Asuka's death, and seeing Asuka again so suddenly was simply too much for them to handle at once. Once Shinji and Asuka entered the school gate, the stares intensified. Wherever they were, people around them fell silent and stared. They were kinda late for the day, tho. Asuka had to go to the principal's office at first to check-in; her student status was deactivated, after all. They met Sensei in the office, who was clearly under shell shock; the principal just informed him that he would have to announce Asuka's return to the class.

"… Soryu was dead. Now she just came back alive. I don't know how the students would take this." Sensei said, clearly in disbelief, "Where is Soryu? I may need to brace the class first. Soryu could wait outside the class."

"Nebukawa no Sensei," Asuka was never good at respecting elders, "Im Soryu Asuka. What do you want me to do?"

Sensei turned around at the familiar voice; his body twitched as his eyes made contact with the more familiar face. "S-Soryu, y-you will wait here until the class starts. Then you may wait outside the class; I will inform the class about your arrival."

"Yeah, yeah whatever." Asuka found a seat and sat down. "Shinji, you can go now. You don't need to wait for me; besides, you can always give the class a bracing period!"

Shinji nodded and decided to enter the classroom first. After all, Sensei was going to make another fake announcement about Asuka's return; it would probably be a good idea to let Kensuke, Toji, or Hikari spread the news in the chat rooms at first.

Shinji entered the classroom, greeted the trio as usual, and walked straight to his seat. He pulled out his laptop and started typing.

Chatroom 03. Guests: Shinji.I, LebronJames, EVAUnit01, Hikari.H

Shinji.I: Hey guys, Asuka's going back to school today. I want you guys to help me brace the class for it.

Hikari.H: Sure, Shinji-kun. What can I do to help?

LebronJames: OMG the Red Devil is returning? What a nightmare!

Hikari.H: Suzuhara! This is not nice!

EVAUnit01: ye, Toji. At least she almost died for us. We should show some gratitude.

LebronJames: Fine. Sorry about that, Shin-man. Now, what can I do?

Shinji.I: Its ok. Just help me spread the news across different chatrooms. Need brace period.

Hikari.H: Got it.

LebronJames: Ok

EVAUnit01: sure

Shinji exited the chatroom. A minute later, he could hear the murmur of the class suddenly became an explosive chattering. Many students turned their eyes to look in Shinji's direction; most of them curious. Some of them were looking ready to ask him questions. Shinji was starting to feel nervous; he just hoped things could turn back to normal.

The bell rang, and Sensei came in.

"Rise! Bow! Sit!" Hikari announced.

Sensei pushed his glasses higher, "Hello, class. Today I have an announcement to make. Soryu-san will be back with us." He was about to say "transferred back from Germany," but he knew every student in the class probably knew it was fake. He also didn't want another outburst from Shinji, so he decided to go on an easier way, although it was against his always-follows-instructions personality.

The class immediately exploded into chattering. Asuka saw this as a great opportunity to enter the classroom since the class couldn't really get louder, and she would also draw less attention since the students were distracted in their own chats.

As Asuka proudly walked into the classroom, the chattering suddenly fell completely silent.

'Mein Gott, this is not what I thought would happen.' Asuka quickly walked to her old seat and sat down as if everything was normal.

"S-s-s-Soryu-san," A girl in the corner finally spoke up after a long and awkward silence, "we thought you were… err… Shinji-kun said…"

"Well, Im not! Is me sitting here and talking not enough to convince you that I'm alive?" Asuka said back; she was clearly irritated by the hundreds of new messages that appeared in her inbox.

"B-b-but Shinji-kun said…" Another male student spoke up.

"Ahem, how about this?" Asuka decided to do something to settle the thing once forever since she didn't want to deal with this anymore. "I am alive because I am a clone of my original body! Is that enough for you? Now just leave me alone!"

The class fell silent again. Shinji was clearly taken aback by her statement, "A-Asuka, what the…" Asuka gave him several blinks; Shinji immediately understood her meaning. "what the hell? You are not supposed to tell them!"

The class exploded again.

The rumors were spreading like wildfire across the campus.

"Hey dude, ya know what? That hot German Eva pilot from class-2A is a fucking clone!"

"No fucking way! So she's not even human? What the fuck! I even thought about dating her! Jesus!"

"Ye, right! Gotta get away from her…"

"And that male pilot seems to be dating her! I saw they held hands this morning!"

"Maybe he's a clone as well… freaks find freaks…"

"Hey, you can't be serious! This is not some kind of sci-fi movie! I bet she was just joking!"

"Well, we have those giant robots defending us! Does that sound sci-fi enough? And she's a pilot of those things! Im not surprised that they have backups for pilots! It's almost logical!"

"Tru man, I kinda agree with ya. I mean, if those robots are crucial to humanities' survival, they wouldn't just have one pilot for each! It's reasonable that they have clones for their pilots!"

…

The rumors were still hot after a full week. To Asuka's surprise, the number of boys harassing her declined exponentially. Although before she would have felt disappointed that people were ignoring, almost avoiding her, since her pride would have been hurt. Now tho, she simply felt happy that she finally could spend more time with Shinji. The number of girls approaching Shinji also diminished significantly; since they thought that Shinji was also an Eva pilot, there would be a large chance that he was a clone as well. The decline of attention from other people in the school didn't annoy the pilots; quite the opposite, they felt relaxed and happy. They still had their friends, after all.

At least, they would still have each other.

It was a sunny day in Tokyo-3.

Every student in the classroom quickly got out of their seats the second the lunch bell rang, leaving Sensei standing in front of the class.

"Shinji," He waved to him, "could you come here for a second?"

Shinji remembered this particular exchange. He stood up and walked to the Sensei.

"I've noticed that you have been doing well in your studies these past few weeks." He praised, but his expression still plain, "I was thinking about arranging a meeting with your father to discuss the possibility of advanced education."

Shinji has already expected this. But now the teacher was offering something different, much more advanced than in his timeline. It was logical that he had good grades; he had already done those tests for once, after all. "My… father?"

"I know, I know. He's a busy man." Sensei said, "But your education is important."

Shinji slowly turned his head to see Asuka leaning against the doorway with her arms crossed, waiting for him.

"Umm." Shinji started to scratch his head. "I… guess I'll talk to him…" He was not really agreeing to the Sensei; he simply wanted not to keep Asuka waiting longer. He could talk with Miasto about this; she was his guardian as well.

Shinji and Asuka walked slowly back home. Just as they were about to enter the door, Shinji suddenly remembered something important. 'I remember something had happened the day I called my father for my teacher's arrangement… oh right, the power outage, and the Angel.' "Asuka, I think today should be the day when the Angel attacked."

Asuka blinked, and remembered as well. "Scheisse! You're right! Let's go to the Geofront now!" They quickly turned around and knocked at Rei's apartment's door. Rei came out seconds later, "Hello, Shinji-kun, Hello, Asuka-chan."

"Rei, you need to go to the Geofront with us now!" Shinji said worriedly.

"That is… agreeable," Rei said, "we have a sync test tonight. I was about to depart 30 minutes later."

"Great, now just get going!" Asuka grabbed Shinji's wrist and dragged him along. Rei followed them swiftly. The pilots exited the building and ran towards a group of Section 2 guards.

"Abort the test." Dr. Akagi groaned, "Break the circuits and start from procedure 188 agai-"

There was sudden darkness in the room. The screens darkened and shut down. The green circuits showing successful connections turned black.

"Main power has shut down." Maya announced, "The voltage is zero."

People were staring at Dr. Akagi, waiting for answers.

Ritsuko dropped some cold sweat. "I… I didn't do that."

NERV Headquarters was one of the most technologically advanced facilities in the world. The possibility of a power outage would be virtually zero.

"Where's the backup generator then?"

There was silence as the technician used the remaining battery power on his computer to investigate. "It's dead too."

"No way!" Sub-commander Fuyutsuki said, "Are there any working circuits?"

"Only one pint two percent working," Maya replied, "and they are old circuits before circuit number 2567."

"Draw all of our remaining power to MAGI and central dogma," Fuyutsuki ordered, "Ignore the air conditioning. This is the most

important thing!

"

The pilots ran towards the entrance of the Geofront, and were frustrated to see that the power had already gone out. Asuka still stubbornly slid her ID card across the machine, and as expected, nothing happened.

"Perhaps the power is out." Rei proposed.

"Yeah, Ive noticed," She replied snidely. "Wonder girl, what do you propose we do then?"

Just as Shinji was about to speak up, Rei interrupted him. "There is an alternate route into NERV that bypasses these gates."

"Okay then, Wondergirl." Asuka said, "Lead the way then." Although she had already experienced this before, she still couldn't beat Rei at find routes inside the Geofront, that she's sure of.

"As you wish." Rei replied, starting to make her way down the hall to the right. The Second and Third Children remained close behind the blue-haired girl while she guided them through the maze of halls.

"I'm still impressed that wonder girl just knows this place so well." The redhead whispered to Shinji.

"Maybe she's been here long enough…" Shinji said, "or maybe she has a photographic memory or something."

They walked for a little longer to enter a large chamber.

"Everyone listen!" A voice echoed above them. The three teens looked up and could see what looked to be headlights passing by over all of the gratings.

"Is that…" Asuka squinted her eyes as she started listening to the voice carefully. "Hyuga?"

"I think so." Shinji confirmed.

"An Angel is coming!" He shouted, his voice traveling through the darkened halls. "I repeat, an Angel is coming!"

"Yeah, already knew that coming…" Asuka sighed, "We must hurry up then…"

"Hmph." Fuyutsuki shook his head. "Of all times there could be an Angel attack, it has to be now."

Gendo slowly raised himself from his seat. "I'm going to launch the EVAs manually." He said to the Vice Commander, his tone void of any real emotion.

Gendo turned to face Fuyutsuki as he made his way to the ladder leading to the cages. If the Vice Commander didn't know any better, he could've sworn he saw a smile on Commander Ikari's face. "We have a diesel-powered generator for launching the EVAs in case of emergencies." He snickered. "I guess we're going to finally get to test it out and see if it works."

"But where are the pilots?" Fuyutsuki asked.

"Section 2 had reported 30 minutes ago that they picked up the pilots to the Geofront for sync tests. They should be here any moment." Gendo said, "But we still have someone important missing."

"Where's Captain Katsuragi?"

"It's hot even with all the clothes off…" Misato grumbled as she used her fanning hand to cool herself down.

"Cuz the air conditioning also shut down," Kaji said with a sly grin. "Katsuragi, take your shirt off if you can't stand the heat."

The lavender-haired woman threw a glare at her ex-lover. "Don't think about anything like that right now!"

"It'll cool you off." He shrugged. "And it's not like I haven't seen it before."

Feeling disgusted, Misato pulled her jacket back on and zipped it up. She'd rather sweat to death than humor him.

The three pilots still had to use the ventilation shaft to go to the command center. Of course this time Asuka didn't mind Shinji crouching behind her. A part of her actually wanted Shinji to look; she then realized that Shinji had already seen much more. They soon arrived at the top of the command deck.

Below the vents, Ritsuko began looking around. "What on Earth was that?"

Maya began searching for the source of the noise as well. "It sounds like it's coming from above us."

The shaft was kicked open, and three pilots jumped off, each of them making perfect landings.

"We were looking for you three!" Ritsuko said, "Right now, we have an Angel attack to worry about."

"But we don't know the detail of the Angel, nor visual contacts, Dr. Akagi." Rei asked.

"Emm, according to the JSSDF, the Angel is a spider-like creature. Nothing too fancy. Now you need to get into your Evas."

"How are we supposed to pilot our EVAs without any power?"

"We have a diesel-powered generator in case of emergencies like this." She explained, pointing towards the rather archaic machine planted on the far side of the room. "The Entry Plugs have to be inserted by hand, though." Ritsuko pointed her finger in the direction of people working hard to pull up the entry plug. Following her pointing, they found Gendo and a bunch other technician pulling the strings, opening the hatch.

"It's great that our EVAs are ready for launch and all, but how the hell are we supposed to get to the surface without the launch platforms?" Although Asuka had already known the answer, she felt it still had to be asked.

"Simple, really." Asuka didn't like the grin Ritsuko was making. "You'll climb."

"This is so lame." The pilot of Unit 02 complained as she led the other two EVA Units through the transport tunnels, crawling on their hands and knees as they made their way to the location of the Angel.

"It is very inconvenient." Even Rei seemed to be a little bit agitated. "Our battery power will be nearly depleted by the time we reach the Angel at this rate."

"Asuka," Shinji called to her. "The end of the shaft is up ahead. We're going to have to kick out the wall to get to the tunnel to the surface."

Asuka already knew what she was going to do. Without a word, she kicked hard on the shaft, and the meters-thick metal door bent and fell effortlessly.

"I think we need to wait for the Angel to show its weaknesses," Asuka said; she was waiting for the Angel to drop its first wave of acids, tho. They then saw some orange-ish liquid fell down the tunnel in front of them.

"Now it's the time!" Asuka exclaimed, pulling out her rifle. She quickly crawled out of the tunnel and aimed at the Angel. The rain of bullets flew up and torn the soft tissues of the Angel apart. The Angel screamed in pain and fell to the ground.

"That was… much easier than I thought," Asuka murmured, but she soon composed herself. "Look at this! The Angel never stood a chance against the great Soryu Asuka Langley!"

The Angel's body busted open into a pool of flowing red LCL. The cascade of the blood-like liquid drenched the EVA Units as it flooded the chute, seeping all the way down to the GeoFront, dripping onto NERV Headquarters.

"It looks like they killed it." Fuyutsuki commented as he watched the LCL drain onto the grassy field of the GeoFront.

"Did you doubt them?" Commander Ikari threw his eyes over to the Vice Commander. He simply shook his head. "Not at all."

Tokyo-3 remained shrouded in darkness as the moon rose and the blanket of the night took over. Asuka, Shinji, and Rei sat back on a grassy ledge overlooking the sleeping city, the illumination from the moon and stars bringing a faint light to the metropolis below. Asuka and Shinji still decided to enjoy the review once more, since this was not something that they could see regularly.

"There sure are a lot of stars out tonight." Shinji commented, looking up at the blackness of night. He heard a huff from Asuka, who was laying down on the ground next to him, her hands behind her head and one leg crossed over the other.

"There are always that many stars out, Baka-Shinji." She said, rolling her eyes. "It's just that you the city's light pollution wiped them out."

The blue-haired pilot of Unit 00 leaned back, joining them in their stargazing. "I enjoy it like this." The other two pilots stared at her,

surprised to hear her actually contribute to the conversation. "I like being able to see the stars, and… being with my friends."

"Yeah, I agree with the 'with my friends part,' wonder girl." The redhead replied, looking back at the darkened city. "But I don't enjoy the darkness. I need bright lights. It makes me feel at home."

"Why's that?" Shinji asked, leaning his back on the grass and resting his hands behind his head.

"I lived in Berlin." She answered. "It's always bright there. Even at night."

Shinji tried not to make any stupid comments, but soon found him speechless. After all, he was not good at catching up on conversations.

Asuka clearly sensed Shinji's struggle. She chuckled and continued her talk. "Well, although I lived there for a long time, I still couldn't really see the whole city like this." She turned her head towards Shinji. "I've been training to become an EVA pilot since I was eight years old. Day in and day out was just schooling, endless studying, physical training, and simulation tests." Rei began to avert her eyes from the sky and looked over at the pilot of Unit 02. "The closest I ever got to actually seeing what it was actually like to live in Berlin was at night when I would go to bed." She began to lean up, resting her elbow on the ground and propping her head on her palm. "I could look out my window and see all of the bright lights and all of the people walking around on the sidewalks. They all looked like they were having so much fun." Asuka started to frown. "They looked like they were…"

"Happy?" Rei finished, causing the redhead to turn around and face her. She didn't snap at her, nor did she feel any malice towards Rei for cutting her off. She was just far too stunned by how right she was. "I know what that feels like." Rei took in a deep breath. "To look at everyone around you and see that even in times as dark as the

ones we live in now, they are still smiling. Still cheerful. Still… happy."

"But now, I have found my happiness," Asuka smiled at Shinji, "What'd you say, Baka?"

Shinji smiled back, reaching out a hand to take hold of Asuka's. "Never been happier ever."

Down in the metropolis of Tokyo-3, lights began to flicker as the city came back to life. Soon its brightness drowned out the stars above, but in turn, brought light to where there was once darkness.

AN: yes, back to the canon. Not really into writing combat scenes, tho. But I will emphasize it when needed, like for 13th, 14th, and 16th. The next chapter may take longer to upload. Probably a week or so.

An Angel's Invasion

AN: A relatively short chapter. Just a clarification: thanks for all of your comments. And the purposes of this fanfic are to give Asuka and Shinji some happiness since I was pissed off when first seeing 3.0+1.0 spoilers. It's natural to feel their adventures are too easy, because it's my intention. Anyways, their Angelic abilities won't help much when fighting the Angels, and I'm planning to have some new traumas for them. Some of the scenes I wrote only for fun. And yes, I got the idea of "Israfel Special" from Advice and Trust by Panther2G. Not saying I'm gonna do it, tho.

And I'm not going to abuse their Angelic powers; but of course I'm gonna have fun!

Chapter 9: An Angel's Invasion

SEELE 02: "Ikari, the construction of Unit D is completed. I intend you to use it effectively. Unit D is also made from Lilith, therefore capable of initiating Instrumentality if an S2 organ is acquired."

SEELE 01: "Ikari, we need to make sure the scenario is not threatened. We need Unit D to ensure it, not endanger it. Is that understood?"

Ikari: "Yes. I had Doctor Akagi to make sure no anomalies were detected from the Second Child; however, we still can't trust her too much yet. The Second Child is easy to control; she had no other purpose in her life other than piloting an Eva. And I'll use the Second Child to make sure the Third Child act as we planned, seeing they had developed a relationship."

SEELE 07: "Good, Gendo. But there's still no soul inside Unit D; how can you make sure that those two pilots will synchronize with the Unit as good as in their respective Evas?"

Ikari: "We will use the core of Unit 01. Since the Second and Third Children had performed an astonishingly high sync ratio during their first battle together inside Unit 02, I am sure they will do well. My son may still pilot Unit D solely if needed."

SEELE 01: "Excellent. Keep an eye on any possible disturbances, Ikari."

"What do you mean that you are gonna deactivate Unit 01?" Asuka shouted; she couldn't believe what she thought she had heard. Although her mental state had improved a lot by being with Shinji, she still felt a wave of uncontrollable anger shot up her body as she heard that her boyfriend's Eva Unit would be taken away, which means she would have to fight without the person she trusted the most. Shinji was also shocked to hear the announcement; after all, why would they deactivate a perfectly fine Eva Unit? Not to mention Unit 01 was critical to whatever scenario that his father or SEELE were planning, right? Also, this was nothing like what had happened in his timeline. And he was sure that this hadn't happened in Asuka's timeline as well, since the look in her eyes, the hurt, the disbelieve, and the anger were not faked. They were real.

"Calm down a bit, will you Asuka? Let me finish first!" Misato raised her volume, trying to sound commanding, "NERV Berlin will be transporting a new Eva Unit D to us. And we'll put Unit 01's core inside Unit D, sounds good?"

"Misato-san, why the change? Wasn't Unit 01 good enough?" Shinji tried to stand by Asuka's side, and this was really all he could do.

"Unit D features a dual-piloting system. That means you two will be piloting the same Unit, considering your excellent sync ratios in the sortie against Gahgiel, and it also has some advanced or experimental weaponry and sensors."

Asuka had calmed down a lot hearing that she would not be separated from her boyfriend in battles. "Hmph, you could say that at

first!" Asuka felt thrilled at the idea of piloting alongside her love, "But I guess I can forgive you for that, considering I kinda like that idea. And one more thing, it has to be RED!"

Misato chuckled and sighed in relief. She had finished the most challenging part of the announcement; she was pretty surprised that Asuka didn't try to strangle her immediately after she heard the news. "Aight, and Shinji, you'll still be able to pilot Unit D alone if needed. Anyways, it should be here tomorrow. Then you two will have your first activation test in Unit D together. Cool?"

"Hai." The pilots said in unison.

The day moved on rather quickly. The squeaks of cicadas echoed in Rei's apartment; she had been increasingly sensitive to her surroundings after she had stopped taking the drugs. Now, Rei was alone in her apartment, thinking. She had made several new observations on her fellow pilots, and she intended to converse with them directly. 'Shinji-Kun and Soryu-san's actions around each other were… fascinating to observe. Their AT-Fields almost shine around each other. I wonder what that feeling is. I wish to experience the emotion myself.' Having made a decision, Rei stood up and came to the Katsuragi Residence. She was tempted to press the doorbell, but she then remembered that now she had the key; it was a sign of trust in her. Rei liked the sensation of being trusted, so she decided to not waste the trust the other had given her. She took out the keycard and opened the door with it.

Ayanami entered the living room. Misato was having another beer while Shinji and Asuka watched TV together.

"Hello, Captain Katsuragi. Hello, Shinji-Kun. Hello, Soryu-san." Rei greeted the trio.

The three of them were clearly surprised; normally, they would hear doorbells or "Tadaima." Shinji jerked his head in the direction of Rei, "Ah, Hi, Rei! Emm…"

Asuka interrupted him with a snort, "Hmph, you could always say something before entering the apartment! How does 'Tadaima' sounds to you?"

"But this is not my home. My apartment is next door." Rei said in a confused tone; certainly, "I'm home" can only be used when entering one's home, right?

Misato smiled, "Rei-chan, you don't need to alienate yourself. This is your home; Home is not a physical location; it is where your families are, right?"

"That is… agreeable," Rei finally said after a few seconds of thinking.

"Great! Now repeat with me, 'I'm home.'"

"I'm… home," Rei repeated.

"Welcome home!" Misato, Shinji and Asuka said in unison.

Rei blushed a little. She had never felt something like this before; she felt… accepted. She had never needed acceptance since before she had always been alone. She decided this new feeling was pleasant. But now she had something important to do. "Shinji-Kun, Soryu-san, I… I want to have a conversation with you, privately."

"Rei, we can talk here. You can trust Misato-san, and I'm sure she can give you useful advice." Shinji said, not sure of what Rei wanted to talk about. He assumed it had something to do with NERV's secrets, or drugs, so she would like to talk to him and Asuka privately.

"Yes, wonder girl, you can trust Ms. Hangover here." Asuka mocked, which clearly irritated the drunk adult, "Asuka! I'm not drunk!"

"Yeah, yeah, keep telling yourself that!" Asuka stuck out her tongue.

"Guys, shouldn't we be listening to what Rei here wants to say?" Shinji interrupted the incoming argument between his two

roommates. He was sure what would happen if he doesn't interfere.

Misato and Asuka exchanged a glare, decided to listen to Shinji this time. "Rei, what do you want to say?"

Rei thought about this for a while and took a deep breath. "Recently, I have been experiencing some new emotions, which confuses me. I… can feel the bond between Shinji-Kun and Soryu-san. Their bond is strong and beyond physical. I wish to experience this bond as well."

The trio blinked. Asuka felt a chill ran down her spine, 'What the hell? Is wonder girl trying to steal MY Shinji?' "Ahem, listen, wonder girl. The… bond you are talking about is between two people only! And my Shinji is not for rent!"

Misato suddenly started laughing hard, "Hahahahaha! Rei is asking us for advice on relationships! How cute! Hahahaha…"

Shinji forced himself a nervous laugh, "Asuka! You know I'm yours… but I think we can help her somehow… I mean, Rei longing for a relationship? That's something new! Maybe we can…" Shinji gave Asuka a look that says 'We can use this to help Rei be normal. Then we may have a better chance of having Rei make her own decision when the time comes and thus stopping Third Impact.' Asuka nodded, indicating that she had received the message. "Wonder girl, we can help you find a boyfriend if you want! That will certainly suffice your wish to experience our bond!"

Rei, on the other hand, had a confused look on her face. "Boy… friend? I already have a boyfriend."

Shinji and Asuka's jaws dropped. "Wha… who?"

"Shinji-Kun is my 'boyfriend,' isn't he?" Rei said innocently.

Shinji and Asuka fell silent. Misato laughed harder. "Hahahahahaha! Oh my, my, Shin-chan, never thought you'd interested in an 'Israfel

Special', eh? Hahahaha…" Which made Shinji and Asuka blush once they realized what 'Israfel Special' means.

"R-Rei, wha-what are y-you talking about?" Shinji stammered; he could literally feel Asuka's AT-Field pressing harder and harder against his, saying, 'I want an explanation, NOW!'

"Shinji-Kun is a boy, and he is my friend. Therefore, he is my boyfriend." Rei said in a plain tone.

Shinji and Asuka stayed silent for another few seconds, then burst out in laughter. "Hahahaha! Nice one, wonder girl! Hahaha… does this make me your 'girlfriend'? Oh Gott, having a boyfriend and a girlfriend at the same time, Hahahaha…"

"That is correct; I regard Soryu-san as my girlfriend."

"Rei-chan, boyfriends and girlfriends do not work this way," Misato finally calmed down from laughing, "Having a boyfriend means romantic and sometimes sexual relationship, ya know? Not just a friend that's a boy!"

Rei seemed to think about this newly acquired information for a while. She said, "what kind of interactions indicate a 'sexual relationship'?"

Misato swallowed, she had never thought Rei would ever ask this kind of question, and she had never given anyone sex ed before. But seeing herself as the only one who had ever had sex, she felt obligated to do the job. "Rei, emmm… a sexual relationship means… Arghhh this is embarrassing… how about this, if anyone has physical contact with your genitals and you are willing to let them, then it can be said as a sexual relationship."

Rei considered this for a few seconds, then said, "Oh… then Soryu-san is not my girlfriend…" Rei paused for another few seconds, while Asuka exhaled and said, "Of course I'm not your girlfriend! And

Baka-Shinji is not your boyfriend as well!" "But Shinji-kun is still my boyfriend," Rei stated.

Asuka was dumbfounded. She just couldn't believe what she thought she had heard. Turning around to Shinji, Asuka forced herself to spit out some words, "Shinji Ikari. Explain. Now."

Shinji almost had a panic attack; he was so gonna be crushed to mangled meat if he didn't have his AT-Field up against Asuka's. "Wha-what? I-I-I didn't-ne-never-Asuka-" Suddenly he seemed to remember something that may explain the situation. "Asuka… before Over the Rainbow… I dunno…"

Asuka frowned. 'Before 'Over the Raindow'? It was when I traveled back to this timeline. Oh. So maybe this Shinji had sex with Ayanami before Over the Rainbow already? Then I can't really blame anything on Shinji now…' "Well…"

Although Shinji and Asuka seemed to calm down a bit, Misato suddenly started feeling nervous. "Rei-chan, what? You… had sex with Shinji?"

"I did not have sexual intercourse with Shinji-kun."

The trio sighed in relief. "Then what the hell were you talking about, Wonder girl?"

"Shinji-kun came to my apartment to deliver my ID card. He met me in the room when I came out of the bath. He was examining one of my personal items. He fell on top of me and touched my breast. It was… not unpleasant. The situation matches Captain Katsuragi's definition. Therefore, I conclude Shinji-Kun is my boyfriend."

Shinji and Asuka exchanged a look of mutual understanding and relief.

'Gosh this is getting nowhere…' Misato sighed, feeling both relieved and frustrated. 'So it seems like I'm going to give Rei-chan a full

mother's talk… It's gonna be a long day…'

Ritsuko Akagi had a long day. Too much had happened recently; one of the most concerning incidents was still the Second Child's recovery. She had a working theory, tho. Today she decided that she had gathered enough data to test her theory; she input her variables and data into the MAGI, and waited for the outcome.

Ritsuko's small lab was totally dark; the only light was the faint light emitted from her terminal's screen.

Processing Data…

Conclusion #1: Asuka L.S. is the next Angel. Probability: 87%.

Conclusion #2: The next Angel will use Asuka L.S. as its medium. Probability: 13%

Other Possible Conclusions: 34022 Possible Conclusions. Combined Possibility 0.00000000001%

Ritsuko frowned at the result. Although she didn't want to believe it, she trusted MAGI more than other things. 'Maybe I'm inputting so fewer variables,' She thought. Then she added several conditions.

Condition #51: Asuka L.S. has killed or helped kill 4 Angels.

Condition #52: Asuka L.S. didn't commence attack when deep down Central Dogma.

Processing Data…

Conclusion #1: Asuka L.S. is the next Angel. Probability: 67%.

Conclusion #2: The next Angel will use Asuka L.S. as its medium. Probability: 33%

Other Possible Conclusions: 34022 Possible Conclusions. Combined Possibility 0.00000000001%

Ritsuko sighed heavily. She thought there was nothing more she could do to change MAGI's predictions. As hard as to believe it, she couldn't take the risk. She decided to ask MAGI for solutions.

Subject: Asuka L.S.

Suggested Actions:

SA #1: Eliminate Subject /Strongly Recommended

SA #2: Transfer the subject back to NERV Berlin /Moderately Recommended

SA #3: Heavy restraint and Surveillance /Not Recommended

Ritsuko sighed again. She had made her decision.

"What the hell is this?" Asuka cried out, seeing a purple-red mix, 80-meters tall, four-limbs Unit D. "What the hell is wrong with the jerk who painted this?"

"It's me who decided the color," Misato said with a smirk, "nice look, don't you think?"

"This is SOOOO UGLY! I'm not going to pilot this thing until it's all red!" Asuka, although she had grown a bit and her mentality was not as childish as before, she did have a point. The purple-red mix was objectively disturbing. It was not like these two colors repel each other; it was the way they were mixed, the whole design of the color layout, was simply idiotic and unaesthetic.

"Ye, Misato-san, this is really not good-looking…" Shinji said, much to Asuka's convenience.

"Look! Even Baka-Shinji thinks it ugly! You really have no sense of art, Misato!"

Misato sighed. She had spent two whole days designing the color layout of Unit D, and now it seems like all of her work was in vain. "All right you two, get into your respective entry plug. And that's an ORDER." She said the last sentence forcefully.

Asuka huffed, she couldn't really do much about it. After both pilots had sat in their seats, Ritsuko's voice filled the channel. "Shinji, look at your left. Asuka, look at your right." They did that and found a small hatch mounted on the respective sides of their plugs. "This is the emergency exit; it allows you to move freely between your entry plugs. It requires two be opened by both sides, since you two sits in physically different entry plugs."

"You two will be able to see each other through the wall after activation. Just don't get distracted too much. Also, you've noticed that Unit D has four limbs, right? Each of you will control two of them; Asuka, you will control the upper two limbs. Shinji, you have the bottom. And in case of only one pilot is available, you'll be only able to use two arms."

"Hai." They said in unison.

"Now we'll start the synchronization process. Get ready you two."

"Insert Entry Plug. Entry Plug inserted. Commence Entry Plug LCL injection. LCL filled. Establishing A10 connections. A-10 connections established and stable. All circuits are operational. Absolute Borderline passed. Stable synchronization established… sync rate holding steady at ninety six percent." Maya reported, a smile appearing on her face. "Evangelion Unit D activated."

On the screen, it showed Shinji's sync rate at 75% while Asuka's at 21%.

"Shinji, you are doing a great job! Asuka, try focus!" Misato said into the comms. Asuka's sync ratio was too low to operate an Eva Unit at the optimal level.

"I'm trying!" Asuka yelled, irritated. 'Gah, I know this is not my Unit, but it still stung to know I'm not able to sync with it properly. Maybe I'll ask Shinji's mother to help me. Yui Ikari, are you here?'

Confusion. Confusion. Rejection.

"Asuka's synchro graph is all over the place! Her sync rate dropped to zero-point one percent!" Maya said, "Not good! Shinji's sync rate is dropping as well!"

"What happened in there?" Misato's voice came in the comms.

Inside the entry plug, Asuka felt the LCL around her went cold in an instant. She groaned in frustration, "Argh! Shinji! Do something!"

Shinji knew what was happening; he also felt the rejection from the machine. He also knew that it was because Asuka's reckless attempt to communicate with his mother caused this. 'Mother? Are you here?'

Confusion.

'Mother, It's okay. Let Asuka pilot. I'll explain everything at the next sync test.'

Confusion. Reluctant Acceptance.

Both Shinji and Asuka felt a familiar warm sensation around their bodies. 'Thanks, Mother.'

"Sync rate stabilizing!… Shinji's sync rate stabled at sixty seven percent! And Asuka at forty one percent!" Maya reported.

Misato sighed in relief. "Great work you two! You've got excellent sync rates. Now let's try using your four arms."

Shinji and Asuka were happy to hear that they did well. But they still have to work harder to use the four arms effectively. At first they were just waving the arms pointlessly, trying to establish a sense of familiarity. Then they started to synchronize with each other's moves. After 20 minutes of training, they could pull out some amazingly synchronized movements, like they were dancing.

The people on the observation deck felt proud of their pilots, even Ritsuko had to admit that they did a good job. "Okay, 10 more minutes and we'll call it today." Suddenly an alarm went off.

Everyone quickly covered their hands over their ears and frantically looked around the room for the source of what was causing the siren to go off. "Damn it!" Ritsuko slammed her fist onto the desk. "What is it now?!"

"Dr. Akagi!" Maya sounded nearly mortified. "We've detected a heat signature inside Asuka's Entry Plug, and video feeds to the plugs are lost!"

"How?!" She shouted over the alarm.

"Code Blue!" Makoto exclaimed. "It's an Angel!"

Ritsuko's heart skipped a beat. After all, her theory was correct. Asuka was indeed an Angel, and she was clearly waiting for the moment to get into Unit D, just to take it over. Surely this way she could have a much higher chance of getting into Central Dogma. But she had precautions to deal with this type of situation.

Ritsuko pulled out a remote controller, disarmed safety, and pressed the red button.

Inside the left Entry Plug, Asuka first saw some purple-ish tissue sticking on the Entry Plug's wall and growing rapidly. 'What the hell is this? Is this the Angel that hacked MAGI? Why is it here? Mein Gott, I gotta get Shinji and me out of here!' Just as she was thinking about

how to escape the situation, she suddenly felt the composition of LCL around her changing rapidly, and her feet hurt. "AHHHHHHHH!" Asuka cried out in pain and looked down at her feet; she was astonished to see her feet disintegrating. 'What the hell is going on?' But there was no time to waste on thinking how to escape without using her Angelic abilities; her reflex took over, and she swiftly disappeared into the darkness.

In the right Entry Plug, Shinji's brain stopped working as he heard Asuka screamed and saw her simply disappeared.

On the command deck, Ritsuko was still shivering. She had likely just killed one of the pilots, but she was an Angel, right? However, the alarm didn't stop. "AT-Field detected!" Makoto said, "The pilots might be in danger!"

"How possible?" Ritsuko shouted, "The Angel should be dead!"

Misato just stood there frozen since her brain was still processing all the information. 'An Angel inside Asuka's Entry Plug? What? Will my kids be okay? No no no no no…' Shaking her head, she ordered, "Eject right Entry plug! Report pilots' conditions!"

"Right Entry Plug Ejected! Shinji's vitals stable, but his heartbeat rate is breaking the roof!" Makoto said, "Asuka…"

"What! What happened to Asuka!" Misato cried, "Tell me she's okay!"

"There's nothing, ma'am," Aoba said, "We can't detect any sign of her. She's… gone."

"What do you mean by 'gone?" Misato "She's not gone! She must be there!"

"V-video feed reconnected," Maya said, her hands shivering, "I-I can't see anything…"

On the screen, the video feed showing an empty entry plug, with some purple-ish tissues on the wall, glowing. "Someone tell me where she is!" Misato yelled, completely ignoring the ongoing Angel alarm.

Ritsuko realized her mistake; after all, Asuka wasn't the Angel. She had just killed one of the pilots and gained nothing.

"I injected some strong dissociative solutions into the plug," Ritsuko said, "It should have killed the Angel…"

Misato's heart nearly stopped beating once she heard the words. She froze for several seconds and suddenly leaped towards Ritsuko and pinned her on the wall hard. "What did you do? You son of a bitch!" Misato shouted into Ritsuko's face, "What did you do to Asuka?! Give her back!"

"I was trying to eliminate the Angel," Ritsuko said, "Pilots' lives are acceptable losses."

SLAP

Misato slapped Ritsuko's face so hard that the scientist tumbled to the floor.

Asuka had been staying inside the sea of Dirac for an hour. Thanks to her S2 organ, her injuries from the dissolvent had regenerated completely. 'I didn't want to do this, but there were no other options. I would have been dead.' Sighing heavily, she curled herself into a ball. 'I wonder what Shinji is doing. Maybe I can simply teleport into his entry plug and tell him that I'm okay. Gotta make sure that his plug is ejected at first, tho. I don't want to be caught appearing from thin air.' Having decided, she carefully manipulated the exit of her Sea of Dirac, and located Shinji's entry plug. She found it floating in the Geofront's lake. 'Perfect. Maybe I can stay there with him for a while.' Asuka set the exit of the Dirac sea and walked out, just to find a Shinji crying hard inside his entry plug. He saw Asuka disappear,

after all. "Asuka… Asuka… no… I'm sorry…" She smiled faintly. "Hey, Baka-Shinji. What are you doing?"

Shinji nearly jumped out of his seat. 'What was that voice? It was her voice, but…' He quickly jerked his around, just to stare directly into Asuka's pure blue pupils.

"Wha… Asu… ka?" Shinji stammered, not believing what he saw, "Am I… d-dreaming? Is th-this real?"

Asuka lightly flicked his forehead, "Of course I'm real! I have Angelic powers, after all."

Shinji shot up from his seat and embraced Asuka in a tight hug. "Thank God… Asuka… I thought…"

Asuka returned the hug just as fiercely and said, "Baka, you should really stop worrying so much. I can take care of myself, especially with my powers!" She pulled Shinji into a quick kiss, "But… I can't stay here for long. They must think me dead or something."

Shinji sighed, "Yeah… what are you going to do, then?"

"I don't know… we can't hide our identity forever, that's for sure. I think I'll just hide somewhere for now… I don't need food or water to survive, after all." Asuka sighed, "That also means… I can't be with you all day from now on. Maybe… during some nights, I can sneak in, and we'll talk, and maybe sleep together, sounds good?"

"Yeah, that maybe the only thing we can do for now…" Shinji said, a dejected look on his face. He thought this time he could finally spend more time with Asuka, but it seemed this time things were more fucked up, at least for now. "Maybe I should tell Misato about us soon…"

Both of them fell silent for a minute. Suddenly Asuka rolled over and rode on top of Shinji and said, "I remember last time they spent 10

hours to retrieve us. I wonder what we can do during this time?" She said with a passionate look in her eyes.

Shinji looked directly into Asuka's bright eyes, "Asuka… we don't… um…"

Asuka put her index finger on Shinji's lips, shutting him up. "Shhhh… I think this may be our only chance in foreseeable future… dun wanna waste it…" She said, pressing a button on her plug suit, the suit deflated.

"Asuka… but… protection…"

"LCL acts as contraceptive implant… it's okay…" Asuka gently put her lips on Shinji's, her hand stroking his hair.

Unable to come up with more arguments against this, Shinji finally gave in and got off his plug suit.

"… and ENTER!" With a forceful keystroke, Ritsuko uploaded her code into the MAGI. A few seconds later, the screen flicked from red to blue; on the right it said "Self-Destruction Rejected".

"The Angel has gone silent," Makoto reported. "We did it…"

With a big relieved sigh, Ritsuko got up from the floor. This place was dark and messy; dirty pipes tangled with each other like a human's brain. Sticky notes all around the wall; they had just saved humanity from distinction. However, Ritsuko knew that this was not the end of the day.

She exited the chamber, seeing a red-eyed Misato Katsuragi giving her a death glare. Misato thought she had lost Asuka again, and it was because of Ritsuko's arrogance.

"Misato, you need to…" Ritsuko was totally expecting a gunshot through her head.

"Call me Major Katsuragi." Misato was trying hard to not lash out immediately and strangle the blonde bitch in front of her, but her composure was failing.

"Fine, Major. Before you kill me, I want to tell you something you should know." Ritsuko sighed. Before Misato was simply a captain. But now, as a Major, she was cleared for a higher level of classified information. However, the deepest secrets must still be kept from her. "Remember our conversation back then when we first recovered Asuka?"

Misato tried to search in her memories. She couldn't come up with any complete sentences, only blurry images. "No. And I don't know how it has anything to do with stopping me from breaking your neck." Her tone was cold and piercing, full of disgust and hatred. She had never thought her old friend back in University was such a cold and indifferent person. Not to mention what she had done with poor Rei Ayanami.

"I'll put it straight; the other theory I was talking about was Asuka was an Angel."

Misato suddenly remembered their conversation.

"Theoretically yes, but there are a lot of details unanswered. Since only EVAs and Angels could produce an AT-Field, and Unit 02 was certainly not the one which did it…"

"So… an Angel from another universe saved her? That sounds… disturbing. Why would an Angel ever do that? And what about the time? How could she still be alive, seven days without oxygen, food, or water? To be honest, now I'm gonna believe it if you just tell me Asuka herself is an Angel."

Seeing the expression on Misato's face softened, Ritsuko continued, "Major, I ran an analysis on the MAGI. It told me there was a sixty-seven percent of chance that Asuka was an Angel. The MAGI recommended me to eliminate the subject immediately. Instead I

only mounted some precautions; when the Angel alarm went off, and especially the heat signature was from Asuka's plug, I simply reacted."

Misato was processing this information at full speed. After a minute of silence, she finally spoke, "Rits… what you did, said, were horrible. I can never forgive you; Shinji would never forgive you." She decided to leave Ritsuko alive for now; after all, she needed more answers.

Misato's phone suddenly rang. She picked up her phone and accepted the incoming call from the entry plug retrieval team. "Major Katsuragi."

"The entry plug is recovered; pilot Ikari is conscious. No obvious physical injuries." The team reported.

"Roger. Get him to the debriefing room immediately." Misato exhaled. She didn't know how she would break the news to Shinji; she was sure the poor kid couldn't take it anymore.

Rei Ayanami stood in the hallway leading to the debriefing room. The hallway was dark and depressing. Whenever the room is needed, it indicates more people must have been hurt. She… hated the room for that reason. Another new emotion for her, hatred.

She had just been told the situation regarding the Second Child. She had seen the empty entry plug as well. But something was not right; 2 minutes ago, when she had met Shinji in the hallway, she made several interesting observations.

'Observation: Shinji-Kun had been staying inside his entry plug for the past 9 hours. Shinji-kun carried a content expression when walking down the hallway. And… Shinji-kun smelled like LCL and… Soryu-san. How curious. Known Conditions: Staying inside the Entry Plug alone for 9 hours should be an excruciating experience. Soryu-san was disintegrated into LCL. Or did she?' Rei thought about her

last known condition for a while. And continued her train of thought. 'Conclusion: Shinji-Kun had done something physically intimate with Soryu-san. But Soryu-san should be… gone. My observation conflicts with known conditions. Something must be wrong.' Her thoughts were interrupted by a scream coming from the debriefing room.

2 minutes earlier

Shinji walked down the corridor towards the debriefing room. He had so much in his mind; how should he react to the news that's supposed to be Asuka's death? When should he tell the truth to Misato? He wanted to spend more time with Asuka, but he also knew the potential risk of doing this. Just as he was about to enter the debriefing room, he saw Ayanami standing outside, watching him curiously. He immediately turned to a dejected expression, and walked into the debriefing room.t

In the room, Misato sat in the front with Ritsuko standing beside her; a couple technicians and the bridge bunnies sat across the computers. Fuyutsuki was standing at the back of the room. The room was dark and quiet; there was only the wizzling sound of the projector. Everyone had a sad look on their faces, except Dr. Akagi.

Shinji sat down in his seat and waited. Misato took a deep breath, "Shinji… what we are going to tell you… just please, stay with us, okay?"

Shinji let out a big sigh, "It's about Asuka, right? I haven't seen her since… I got ejected." Shinji turned around to look at Misato, who couldn't look straight into his eyes. "I… just tell me she's alive…" Shinji was trying hard to compose himself to keep a sad and dejected mood. He didn't want to do this anymore, he wanted to tell them everything so that he could spend more time with Asuka, but he also knew he couldn't.

Misato sighed heavily. "Shinji… I… we lost her." Shinji's body twitched hearing these words. Misato continued, "There was a

parasitic Angel inside her entry plug, and…"

Shinji got all information he needed at that time. He understood that precautions were made to eliminate the Angel. Those people must have thought they killed Asuka in the process. At least that's what he thought. "An Angel… so our pilots are expandable, right?" Shinji interrupted Misato and shot a death glare towards Ritsuko, "we are all just tools…" He said this not only to himself. He smiled internally as he saw Ritsuko's eyes twitched at his words. "I want to go home." Shinji stood up and left for changing room.

"He took that much better than I thought…" Misato said and left the room as well.

Shinji was lying on his bed listening to his SDAT when Misato knocked on his bedroom door. "Come in," He said.

Misato was surprised to even hear a response; she still remembered how Shinji behaved last time he thought Asuka has died. She slid the door open and leaned on the frame. "Shinji… are you okay?"

"Kinda…" Shinji had no idea of how to reply; he was never good at lying or acting.

Misato was taken aback by his attitude. Shinji did not look like he just lost his love. She thought maybe Shinji had totally lost his mind. "Listen Shinji… I know that… it's hard to take in… especially the second time. But…"

Shinji cut her off, "I know, Misato-san. But I also know that She's okay. I just know it."

Misato blinked. There was no desperation or self-assurance in his voice, but confidence. She sighed again, "I believe you, Shinji-kun. I believe she'll come back."

Shinji smiled, "Thanks, Misato-san."

Hours passed. Shinji tossed and turned in his bed; he was still nervous about Asuka's conditions. He was worried about where she'll be staying during the time. Of course, he didn't worry about her safety; she could certainly take care of herself with her powers. Just as he was about to drift into sleep, he was patted lightly on the shoulder.

"Hey, Baka-Shinji. Are you awake?" Came a familiar voice.

Shinji shot open his eyes and jerked his head towards the voice. He smiled widely as he saw Asuka, still in her plug suit, looking at him with a beautiful smile. "Hey, Asuka. Er… where would you stay? I mean, won't you feel lonely?"

Asuka chuckled, "Baka. I can take care of myself. I'm just staying in the Sea of Dirac for now. Maybe I'll go to the top of the Himalayas and look at the stars if I grow bored."

"Sea of Dirac… is that Leliel's thing? how'd u use it?"

"We traveled here through it. Aayan… Lilith used it to send us here. We simply inherited it. Isn't it so cool?!" Asuka giggled.

"So… I can use this power as well? Cool… maybe I'll try it sometime…"

Asuka quickly planted a kiss on Shinji's lips and stood up, "Gotta go now. Guten Nacht, Liebling. I love you."

"I love you too, Asuka. Good night."

AN: Aw. poor Asuka has been through so much. Next chapter will take another half week I suppose. I know Shinji and Asuka are a bit of OOC sometimes, but remember their mentality was not the same as in the TV series; they've been in love for months.

Lies and Silence

AN: Poor Asuka can't catch a break, can she? In this chapter, Shinji's intense confrontation with Ayanami about their identities. A relatively long chapter since I put two episodes into one. I left out some unnecessary scenes since they don't bother with my plot and I'm sure my readers are all brilliant Eva fans who know what happens in these episodes. :/

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 10: Lies and Silence

Misato just came back from NERV. She had been working non-stop; the paperwork from the UN and public relations has always been a pain in the butt. 'Asuka's gone again,' she thought, 'I wonder where does the confidence of Shinji comes from. Poor kid probably lost his mind.' Sighing, she pulled out her keycard and sliced it through the lock, the door hissed open.

"Tadaima." She entered the apartment, walking straight to 'Shinji's lovely suite'. She wanted to get Shinji some fresh air, since she has been staying in NERV headquarters for 3 days and she thought Shinji must have been rotting in his bed, just like the last time. She was surprised to find the apartment clean and tidy; apparently, Shinji had been taking care of the chores. She then found some food in the microwave and ate; she also noticed a note on the dining table.

Dear Misato-san,

I'm going out for a walk. Coming back late, don't wait for me for dinner. I'll be safe, don't worry.

Love, Shinji

Misato didn't know how to react to this. For one, she felt happy that Shinji was not just rotting in his bed and swallowing into self-pity; for

another, she was worried about his safety, despite the note telling her otherwise. She thought the best thing she could do was to contact Section 2 and make sure they keep an eye on Shinji. The last thing she wanted was to lose another pilot and her… son?

Misato pulled out her phone. "Section 2 agent Shiro."

"Major Katsuragi. I want a report on Pilot Ikari's current location."

"Major, we haven't seen him since he entered your apartment last night. We suppose he's still in your apartment."

Misato blinked. She quickly knocked on Shinji's bedroom door again, no replies coming out. "Shinji, I'm coming in!" She slid the door open and saw an empty room. The blanket on the bed was folded neatly, his SDAT laying on the table.

Misato felt a chill ran down her spine. Section 2 said Shinji hasn't come out of the apartment, but there was no sign of him anywhere here. Where could he be? She swiftly exited the apartment and got in her RA A310, and started the engine. With a loud roar, the blue A310 rushed out the parking lot and sped down the road. She's gonna find her Shinji.

"Well, this place is kinda subpar compared to Mount Everest, but I guess it'll do!" Asuka exclaimed joyfully, her arms stretching high into the sky. She was wearing her favorite yellow sundress that she had 'stolen' from her wardrobe and a violet choker. Her ever-present red A-10 clips were missing, and her golden-red hair poured down her head like a waterfall. This new look of her was just heartbreaking. Thanks to her S2 organ, the energy generated from it had been keeping her body temperature stable. The night sky was beautiful when seen from the top of Mount Alps; there was no light pollution or air pollution to block out the stars; they looked truly amazing. "Shinji, what time is it now?" Asuka turned her head toward a certain brown-haired boy standing beside her who was smiling contently.

"Errr, Japan local time twelve-thirty P.M.," Shinji said, "here we're at four-thirty A.M. The sun is about to come out."

"Wunderbar," Asuka said; it was her idea to come to the top of the Alps to watch the sunrise. The time difference here was perfect; Shinji could go back to the apartment in Japan's afternoon. "Ahem, what do you think about the sky, Baka?"

Shinji stood for a few seconds, trying to come up with a comment that's pleasant for Asuka to hear. "Hmmm, the stars… they remind of me of your blue eyes. They're just, errr, so beautiful."

Asuka blushed a little hearing those words. "It's a good thing for you to appreciate my beauty, Baka. You're stuck with me for good!" She planted a quick kiss on Shinji's right cheek, who also blushed a shade of red. "But… we can't stay like this forever. And I'm not going to leave you and wonder girl to fight Angels without me, the most skilled and brilliant pilot!"

Shinji chuckled; one thing he had always loved about Asuka was her pride and confidence, of course when appropriately displayed. "I know, Asuka. I'll break the truth to Misato as soon as possible, but I need to make sure she could take it in it first."

Asuka huffed, "Hmph, that drunk would believe everything after two cans of beer! Just make sure she doesn't have her pistol handy when I come out, I don't want to get shot in the head if she thinks I'm an Angel!"

"Sure thing, Asuka," Shinji said. He had a good idea of Misato's extreme hatred towards the Angels; one of them took out her father's life, after all. "Look, the sun is coming out!"

A faint white-yellowish light appeared from the eastern horizon; minutes later, the upper part of the sun could be seen. The sun rose slowly but steadily, the light quickly covered all the stars. Asuka and Shinji sat down, their fingers intertwined, watching one of the most

beautiful scenes they'd ever seen in their entire lives. "Shinji… I want us to be like this forever… I feel so happy…"

Shinji smiled, "I want to be with you forever as well, Asuka. Nothing can stop us."

Asuka rested her head on Shinji's shoulder, a content sigh came out of her mouth. They stayed like this for like an eternity.

"The next Angel is Leliel…" Shinji suddenly said, "I guess I'll just wait for my mother to help me." Shinji sighed; he didn't want to rely everything on her mother. And last time Asuka was there to delay the N2 strike that would have killed Shinji, this time without her, no one knows what might happen.

"Just be careful, Baka." Asuka pouted, "If you don't come back… I'll… I'll come to you wherever you are, and I'll make you hope you were dead!"

Shinji chuckled hearing the threat. The sun had come out completely, the sunshine poured down from the sky covering both demi-gods. "Okay, it's time for you to go! They don't want to make the drunk worried, do you?" Asuka giggled.

"Fine… just ten more minutes…" Shinji laid down on the ground, having no intention of moving.

Asuka scowled and groaned, "Baka! Just move your ass! Or I'll do it in the hard way!"

Shinji felt a chill ran down his spine; last time it took Asuka literally kicking him down Mount Everest so that he would use the sea of Dirac to escape, and go back home. "Sorry…" Shinji quickly stood up before planting a quick kiss on Asuka's lips. "See ya later!"

"Hmph." Asuka waved her goodbye, and Shinji disappeared into the darkness.

Shinji came back to the apartment; he came out from the sea of Dirac which had the exit below his bed. He felt exasperated; the S2 organ was indeed an infinite power source, but it acted more like a self-charging battery. It could only hold a certain amount of energy, but energy won't stop regenerating. Using the sea of Dirac requires an insane amount of power. Shinji actually felt fatigued the first time ever since he time-traveled. 'Gotta be careful the next time, can't abuse my abilities,' he thought. Lying under his bed for a while, he felt the fatigue dissipate. 'Haven't heard any noise since I came back,' Shinji rolled over and came out of the bottom of his bed, standing up. 'Gotta make sure Misato doesn't suspect anything.' His heart sank as he saw the food that he prepared for Misato was gone. 'Not good… I didn't think Misato came back so early… She must've seen my note, tho.' The original plan was to come back before Misato; the note that he left was merely the failsafe for the worst.

Shinji pulled out his phone and dialed Misato's number.

"Shinji!" Misato's voice came immediately, "Where are you? I've been looking for you! Section 2 said you never left the apartment, but I saw your note, and you weren't in the apartment!"

"M-Misato-san, I…" Shinji's heart was pounding crazily; he needed to come up with a lie fast. He took a deep breath and decided to make a big bet, "I… I've been staying in… errr… Asuka's room!" Shinji realized that Misato must thought Asuka's dead, so he quickly came up with an idea, "emmm… I just wanted to… clean up her room, since she… can't do it herself anymore…"

Misato frowned; she indeed hadn't checked Asuka's room back in the apartment. She never thought Shinji would have the guts to come into her room without permission. But then she realized that Asuka was gone, so maybe Shinji simply wanted to mourn her death. After all, you can't really get permissions from the dead, right? However, she was curious about the fact that she didn't hear any sadness from Shinji's tone. Still, she decided to ignore it for now. "I see… Shinji; I know you've missed her…" She sighed, "but… just stay safe, okay? I thought that you…"

"I'll be alright, Misato-san," Shinji interrupted.

Misato exhaled in relief. She made a U-turn and headed home.

Shinji hanged up the call and released the breath that he had been holding. Looking around, he decided to make some dinner first. "Tadaima." A familiar voice came from the door. Shinji nearly jumped up hearing the announcement, but he soon calmed down, realizing it was Rei, not Misato.

True to his thought, a blue-haired girl entered the dining area, her expression unreadable.

"H-hello, Rei," Shinji greeted, "errr… you want something to drink?"

"Tea would suffice," Rei replied, "I come here to discuss personal matters with you."

"Okay…" Shinji said, feeling nervous since he had never seen Rei's expression like this. Minutes later, he came back with two cups of tea and sat down at the table across him sat Rei. "What do you wanna talk about, Rei?" Shinji asked.

"Pilot Soryu is alive," Rei stated, her expression unchanged, "and you know it."

Shinji blinked. "wha-what are y-you talking about?" He stammered, his heart rate skyrocketing. "Rei, we all saw…"

"I made the conclusion based on my observations," Rei interrupted, "there is no need of denial." She said with a degree of coldness.

"Wha-what observations, Rei?" Shinji stammered, still didn't want to give up.

"You smelt like Soryu-san after you came out from your entry plug, and your mental state is substantially different from the last time that you were informed of Spryu-san's death," Rei said, "these undeniable facts lead to only logical conclusion-you had been

engaged in physical intimacy with Soryu-san inside your entry plug during the attack of eleventh Angel."

"But… I was the only one in the plug when the rescue team came!"

"That is related to my other observation," Rei's expression never softened a bit, "Both you and Soryu-can possess abnormally strong AT-Fields. Therefore, I conclude both of you possess Angelic powers, which were the reason for Soryu's escapes from her deaths."

Shinji knew the battle was lost; Ayanami's deductive reasoning was one of her most powerful skills. Most of the time, she simply didn't care about telling the truth to others; if she were interested in girls gossiping, she would have identified every single pair in the school in a matter of days whether they intend to hide their relationships or not. What's worse, the Angelic powers of Ayanami meant Shinji and Asuka had no escape from exposing their abilities to her. Shinji sighed in defeat, "Fine… Rei, you are right… Asuka's alive, and she's hiding. We are not ready to break the truth to others yet… they may want to do experiments on us or something, much less… eliminate us. We… errr… we simply want to defeat the Angels and live a happy life, that's all. So… could you please, please keep our secret?" Shinji pleaded; this was his last hope.

Rei's expression finally softened, "I do not have problems regarding keeping your secret, Shinji-Kun. However, I sense there is more information you are keeping." Rei said, "I appreciate you and Soryu's care toward me, and I intend to help you as much as I can. However," Rei began adding pressure on her AT-Field against Shinji's, the coldness and seriousness tone came back to her voice, "do not attempt uniting with Adam, or I will end you."

Shinji's cold sweatdropped; he'd never seen Rei acting like this before, "Su-sure thing, Rei. We… we don't feel drawn to Adam." Sighing heavily, Shinji suddenly remembered something important to ask, "Rei… we are still friends, right?"

Rei's expression changed to a small grin, "Of course, Shinji-Kun."

For the following weeks, Shinji never got an opportunity to sit in the entry plug and do sync tests; they need to make sure there was no any Angelic contamination left in Unit D or the testing chamber. He would spend time with Asuka in other parts of the world during weekends when Misato's out for work, and they talked a lot during nights. Shinji also helped Rei to open up to others. Additionally, he came up with a lie about Asuka's current situation, saying she had been doing a lot of tests in NERV and no time to attend school.

On the day of his mother's death anniversary, Shinji decided to confront his father in front of Yui's grave.

The graveyard had grown since the last time Shinji visited his mother. It looked like a few thousand more markers had been added. The immense amount of markers sticking out of the ground was quite unsettling. He stood idly over the monolithic marker that read his mother's name. Behind him stood his father, though he hadn't said a word since arriving a few minutes ago. The pilot of Unit 01 lowered his head and stared at the grave. Her name 'Yui Ikari' was spelled across it, as well as her birth and death year. He already knew that there was no body under the grave, even in his timeline.

"I can't even remember what she looked like." He muttered. Commander Ikari kept a straight face as he looked over his son's shoulder.

"It's not the memories that we keep that are important." He spoke. "It's the legacy we leave behind."

"What was Mom's legacy, then?" Shinji turned his head to face his father, not fully able to look him in the eyes.

"Yui left behind two legacies." Gendo's tone was calm and collected as it always was. "The Evangelion, and you."

"I'm her legacy?" Shinji couldn't believe what he thought he had heard; was his father actually showing some kind of support? He instead wanted to think that this was simply his father's way of manipulating him. He had to admit that this might work before, but now the hatred toward his father had wholly suppressed any positive feelings toward the Commander.

"Of course." He replied. "All the things that you accomplish will give meaning to Yui's life."

Shinji soon devised a plan to confront his father. By no means was Shinji afraid of him, so he decided to go on the hard way.

"Hey Dad?" "What?" The old Ikari's tone was starting to sound a little bit irritable. "When you met Mom, how did you know you were in love?"

Commander Ikari found relief in the fact that Shinji was facing away from him. Otherwise, he might've seen his eyes go wide from the question.

"Why do you ask?" "No reason." He lied. He knew that the Commander knew his relationship with Asuka, and he was sure that old Ikari would abuse it.

"Is this about the Second Child?" His voice was like granite. 'Bingo,' Shinji thought, 'Phase 1 complete. Now engage phase 2.'

"You could say that," Shinji said with a mental grin, "How do you know that she was the one for your life?"

Gendo paused for a few seconds, then stated, "The Second Child is no more. I advise you to sever your emotional ties with her." His cold words made Shinji begin to feel hot, like a burning sensation was starting to erupt in his chest. "The less your synch scores are affected by outside variables, the better."

Shinji didn't give him a response, instead keeping his eyes focused on his mother's name. The hotness in his chest felt like it was about to set his heart up in a blaze of fire, but after a moment of concentration, the burning feeling began to subside.

"But my mother is no more as well," Shinji couldn't help but grin as his father fell into his trap like he thought, "then why are you still doing this?"

Although Gendo used his glasses to hide his eyes, he couldn't hide the twitch of his body. Shinji was trying hard to maintain his composure, not to laugh.

"That is none of your concern." Gendo said, "Your job is to defeat the Angels. There is no other use of you, and you are easily replaceable if you fail to meet expectations."

"Bullshit," Gendo's eyes went wide at Shinji's sudden curse; he had never expected that his submissive son would swear at him. "I know that I'm the only one *she* would allow for piloting Unit D."

Gendo felt a chill ran down his spine at Shinji's emphasis on the word 'she'. 'How? How does he knows… maybe it's just a coincidence… but the way he stressed it… I can't take any risks… this might be a threat to my scenario…' Although his mind was racing, he still needed to act cool. "We shall see, *pilot.* " He said the last word forcefully.

Just at this moment, the sound of a loud buzz began to emerge behind them, causing for Shinji to turn around and see a VTOL starting to make touchdown about twenty meters away from him and his father. Commander Ikari seemed actually relieved by all this. "I have to go now." Commander Ikari spoke before turning around, making his way to the large aircraft.

Shinji silently looked onward as his father made his departure. He took a mental note that Ayanami was not in the VTOL this time, maybe a good sign. He felt *ecstatic* to actually make his father

uncomfortable at his words, without leaking too much knowledge to the oversensitive man.

Coming back to the apartment, Shinji felt like playing his cello. Not only because he was happy about the outcome of his confrontation with his father, but also today was the day he and Asuka first kissed. He wanted to maintain the sense of ceremony, so he pulled out his cello and started playing.

The music carried him away as the melody flowed through him like a river of sound. Engulfed in the melody of Bach Cello Suite No.1, he could almost forget about all of the troubles he had been through, all of the hardships he had faced, all of it felt as though it didn't even exist. It was just him, his bow, and his cello. As he made his final stroke across the strings, he could hear the sound of clapping coming from behind him.

He didn't even need to turn around to know who was clapping, "Asuka! I knew you would come back here today."

True to his words, Asuka was standing at the entrance of the hallway, smiling at him. "I've always been amazed by your talent in music, Shinji."

Shinji smiled back, his hands scratching the back of his head, his face blushed a shade of red. He had zero resistance against Asuka's sincere praises. "T-thanks, Asuka. Emm… I thought you've been playing violin, right? Maybe we could play together?"

Asuka giggled; of course, she had always wanted to play something with Shinji together, and she had prepared for it. Asuka pulled out a violin from behind the wall, "Gah, I've been waiting for a while now. Let's get ready!"

Shinji was more than surprised to see that Asuka actually had been preparing for this special day. He couldn't help but smile wider. Pulling out another chair from the table, he invited Asuka to sit

beside him, so they could see each other's moves clearly. Asuka sat down and readied her instrument, waiting for Shinji to give the signal.

They looked into each other's eyes for a moment, and nodded simultaneously.

Once again music flooded the apartment, and time disappeared for both of them.

After hours of playing, the pilots finally pulled to a stop, content smiles on both of their faces. "Y-you played well, Asuka." Shinji complimented, which caused Asuka to blush a little. After all, it was a compliment from someone who was much more proficient in music than her. "What do you expect, Baka-Shinji?" 'that's the tsundere' "and… you played well, too."

Shinji chuckled, "I have a question, tho" seeing he got Asuka's attention, he continued, "since today is… *that* day, I wanna ask… when you asked for a kiss, what were you thinking? What was the whole 'bored' thing all about?"

Asuka had been kinda expecting this question. Surely back then, it was so weird and sudden to ask something like that, but she had her reasons. "Ahem," she cleared her throat, "It was that Kaji's hooked up with Misato again, and I felt left out. I've always wanted to get your attention, but none of my other hints worked. So I decided to make a bold move."

"Well, it seemed I was so dense to not even notice such an obvious hint…" Shinji made a nervous laugh, "Sorry…"

"What are you apologizing for, Baka?"

"You must've thought I rejected you… Imean, your counterpart." Shinji said with a guilt look in his eyes, "I can't imagine how much it hurt you…"

Asuka stood up and walked in front of Shinji. Before he could react, she leaned over and pulled Shinji into a kiss, effectively shutting him up. Shinji was more than happy to return it; the kiss grew more and more passionate as time went by.

His body fell limp as he felt her push her weight against him, forcing him to lean against Pen Pen's freezer while they continued to kiss. The hot spring penguin started to waddle his way into the kitchen and stopped in his tracks when he saw the two teens were blocking the way to his freezer. He looked up curiously at the two, wondering what it was they were doing. Shrugging it off, he waddled his way back out of the kitchen to sleep in Misato's bed. He could feel Asuka's tongue playfully dancing with his, and shivers went down his spine when he heard her moan. Slowly the kiss started to die down in intensity, and eventually, the redhead pulled herself away from him, keeping her teeth lightly pressed down on his tongue as she slowly pulled away, making the kiss last as long as possible.

"I… I think I've got your message," Shinji said.

"You'd better!" Asuka pouted.

Misato bent over a trashcan in a back alley, vomiting into it while Kaji held her hair back. Katsuragi's hours of binging finally came to a peak at her twelfth shot.

She retched one last time before slumping down, going limp as her ex-lover held onto her to keep her on her feet. He handed her a bottle of water he could grab before heading out, which she was more than happy to snatch out of his hands. The lavender-haired woman chugged down a few gulps, and then spit out the rest into the alleyway, getting rid of anything that was left behind in the transition from her stomach to the trashcan.

"We're not in college anymore." Kaji shook his head as he turned her around and lifted her up onto his back, holding her legs up with his hands while she loosely wrapped her arms around his neck, her high

heels dangling from her fingers. "You don't need to drink yourself sick."

"Asuka's gone again, and Shinji's been acting weirdly," Misato said, "you'd drink a lot too if you were me."

"You and me both know this has nothing to do with Asuka or Shinji," His eyes looked back at Misato, who was resting her head on his right shoulder.

"Kaji." Misato spoke, breaking the silence. "I think I've changed."

"You're right." He smirked. "You're even prettier." He always was quite the charmer. The lavender-haired woman had to hide her smile. "Not what I meant." Her tone sounded much more serious, a strong contrast from Kaji's lightheartedness. She took in a deep breath and exhaled before continuing. "I'm sorry that I wanted to break up with you. When I told you there was another man, I lied." She looked over at him, seeing that he kept his eyes straight forward, not the least bit phased by her words. "But you already knew that, didn't you?"

"No." He lied. Of course he knew there was never another man. Half of his job was to be able to read people. From the day she broke up with him, he knew that she was lying to him.

Misato raised her head and looked up at the stars. There were quite a few of them out tonight. A site that was rarely seen in the metropolitan area of Tokyo-3. "Because I just realized how much like my father you were." Kaji kept his eyes focused on her, but did not rear his head. "I couldn't believe that I wanted a man just like my father. I was terrified." Misato looked over at her ex-lover and frowned. "So I ran. I was afraid of being with you. I thought I hated my father." She took in a breath, sucking in the night air.

"And then I fell in love with a man just like him." She lowered her head. "I thought joining NERV would be a way to sever those ties. And then it turned out my father was with NERV. So then I just tried

to bury it all by swearing my life to avenge him by killing the Angels." She stopped walking, and looked down at the sidewalk, Kaji stopping along with her.

"You chose that path, Katsuragi." He tried his best to sound reassuring. "You don't have to apologize to anyone."

"Don't bullshit me, Kaji! That was not my choice!" She snapped. "I just ran away! I just wanted to escape from the real world and my father!"

A few stifling tears started to emerge. "I'm no better than Shinji is." She stopped to wipe away the salty cascades.

"Who am I kidding? Even Shinji is better than me! Ever since Asuka came around, he's been acting like he has a purpose. Like he has a desire to fight the Angels. God I'm so pathetic."

"Don't say that."

"I don't deserve to be his guardian. How can I help him when he's already better than me? He's found purpose without my help. Hell, look at me! I couldn't even talk to you about this until I was stumbling drunk!"

"Stop it!" Kaji yelled, trying to cease her self-loathing.

"I'm worthless!" She cried. "I'm absolutely worth-" She was brought to silence as Kaji held her close to him and locked his lips with hers. Misato's entire body began to tremble in his arms as he kissed her. Suddenly she felt a lightness in her left hand as she dropped her high heels onto the ground, making a hollow clack as they landed. She didn't care, though.

The only thing that she cared that time was Kaji.

One day later, deep inside of the core of NERV's Terminal Dogma, Kaji punched away at the keypad to activate the keycard terminal to the door many had come to refer as 'The Gate to Heaven'.

Even though his focus was on his work, he couldn't help but think back to the night before. How he had to carry Misato to her room after she had passed out in the elevator to her apartment. He also couldn't help but ponder on the image of Shinji singing and smiling while reading his manga. Kaji felt so confused since Shinji must've known that Asuka's gone, but he acted like Asuka had just confessed to him. His trailing thoughts were brought to an end as he felt the cold metal of a gun barrel against the back of his head. He'd been expecting this. "Hi." he held his hands up, holding the keycard in hand. "Feeling better?"

"I'm sober now, thank you." Misato's voice was sarcastically cold.

"I'm glad to hear that."

"Cut the bullshit." She hissed. "Is this your real profession, or is this just something you do part-time?"

"So I guess you've figured me out, huh?" He didn't sound as threatened as Katsuragi felt he should have.

"Did Ikari put you up to this?"

"No." She shook her head. "This was of my own initiative. You have to realize that if you keep spying on NERV, you will die."

"As long as Commander Ikari still needs me, I'll stay alive for longer." He started to frown, though she couldn't see it. "Although I am sorry I kept this a secret from you."

"I'll let it pass." Misato began to slowly loosen her grip on the gun, but did not remove it from the back of his head. "Consider it payback for your help yesterday."

"I appreciate that." He exhaled. "But you should know that Commander Ikari and Ritsuko are hiding something from you." Without another word, his hand slid the red keycard down the reader before Misato could even react. The terminal made a ding as the huge doors began to open.

"Oh my God." Misato gasped, dropping her gun to the floor. Before her in this massive darkened room was a giant red cross about fifty meters tall, and thirty meters wide. Pinned to it was a bulbous white humanoid creature. Its face was hidden by a seven-eyed mask, or perhaps its face was the mask. Its lower half seemed to be missing, though. What purposed it served was unknown to Misato. However it made the sight all the more unsettling. "There's no way. It can't be!"

"Indeed it is." Kaji put his hands in his pockets. "The key to Second Impact, and everything that has happened since then. This is Adam."

"Adam." Misato echoed the name. "But why is the first Angel here?" She trusted NERV. She knew that what they did was for the betterment of mankind. However, for them to be sheltering the very being that made the world the savage wreck that it is now without telling her made her question her faith in the organization. "You're right." She growled. "I don't know NERV at all."

Kaji chuckled, "you think this is all I got?" He pulled out a PDA from his inner pocket, "I'd like to discuss this with you." On the screen it showed MAGI's analysis of the Second Child, Asuka Langley Soryu. "You told me she was dead, but apparently MAGI picked up something in France."

Misato scanned the information on the screen, her right hand covering her mouth. "Facial image analysis… ninety-one percent similarity?" Misato swallowed hard, "How… is this even possible?"

"Indeed." Kaji said, "The satellite picked up the image outside a musical instrument store in France. If that's really her, how did she get to France without leaving any traces in the transportation system? MAGI has been monitoring it non-stop." Kaji sighed, "Not

mentioning what you guys all saw what happened inside her entry plug."

"Maybe it's just a glitch… or someone that looked really like her?"

"You know that MAGI doesn't glitch," Kaji said, sighing. "there are so many things NERV's been hiding from us, Katsuragi."

Two weeks later, Shinji was walking on the street, singing. Tomorrow would be Unit D's first activation test since the last Angel attack; he was thrilled to talk to his mother. However, as he felt his phone's vibration, he knew his reunion with his mother would be in advance.

In the sky, a surrealistic giant sphere took form above the city of Tokyo-3. Black and white lines swerved across its surface like those found in optical illusions. It didn't make a sound, nor did it move from its position above the metropolis. It merely floated there as all those below it were sucked into its dark grip.

"The target's showing Pattern Orange!" Makoto announced, "we can't know if it's an Angel or not!"

"It's bound to be an Angel," Misato said, "Prepare Unit D and Unit 00 for launch."

Shinji had just finished changing into his plug suit, and he walked into Eva cages. Standing right in front of Unit D, he looked into its eyes, thinking, 'Mother, let's do this.' He climbed into the entry plug, and waited for activation.

Minutes later, Shinji was sent up to the ground, Unit 00 stood 200 meters aside from him, holding a pallet rifle in its hands. "This thing doesn't even have an AT-Field," Misato's voice came in the comms, "Shinji, you'll approach the target with caution, Rei, once Shinji enters 50 meters range of the Angel, you'll execute a simultaneous attack on the target; Shinji will be using his prog axe, and Rei with the rifle. Understood?"

"Roger." Both pilots said.

Shinji willed his Eva to walk towards the sphere slowly. Of course, he didn't want to stay in the darkness again for 12 hours, but he didn't know if there were any other ways to defeat the Angel. Taking a deep breath, Shinji picked up his speed. Pulling out his prog axe, Shinji jumped on one of the buildings and leaped into the air, the prog axe slicing down with a whirring sound of the air. At the same time, Rei fired her rifle; as expected, the black sphere disappeared before either of them can make a hit.

"Pattern Blue confirmed! AT-Field detected!" Makoto shouted, "Oh my god! It's right beneath Unit D!"

"Shinji! Get out of there!" Misato yelled into the comms as she saw a black shadow appeared under Unit D.

Shinji, on the other hand, made no attempts to escape. 'If I get out the Angel may target Rei instead, and it's not like I'll die even if the power runs out. Besides, I could really use the time to talk with my mother.' Having made his decision, Shinji ducked down into the nothingness.

The people on the command deck watched in awe as Unit D disappeared into the darkness. "The sea of Dirac…" Ritsuko murmured, fear in her eyes.

The NERV staff gathered around a whiteboard Ritsuko had managed to scour from inside a nearby building. On it was numerous diagrams and graphs and a few equations that would appear like a foreign language to a normal person, but to those gathered around, it was like reading from a textbook. Dr. Akagi stood upfront with a nightstick she had borrowed from one of the security personnel and used it to point out the different equations and charts as she spoke.

"From what our scanners have detected, it seems that the sphere above the city has no AT-Field of its own. However there is an

inverted AT-Field coming from within the shadow."

"So does that mean the shadow is the Angel?" Misato felt this was the direction Dr. Akagi was going, but felt she needed to have her clarify.

"Exactly." She nodded, lowering the nightstick to her side. "However, the region of space which the Angel occupies can only be defined by abstract mathematics. Essentially it's a Dirac sea. For all we know it could be a portal to another universe." Katsuragi raised her hand, feeling as though she were back in the lecture halls from her college days "Then what about the sphere?"

"It disappears when the imaginary circa of the body closes. So in a way you could say it is a shadow of sorts."

"So basically the sea of Dirac is our target?" The blonde nodded.

Misato suddenly remembered something, "Wait… wasn't the Dirac sea the thing that saved Asuka inside the volcano?"

Ritsuko nodded again, "Yes. So I believe this is the Angel that saved her… or…" She had made the worst assumption on the situation.

Misato felt her cold sweat dropping, "Don't you dare tell me this *thing* is Asuka."

Ritsuko narrowed her eyes, "You are always so perceptive, Major." She pulled out a PDA, the data on the screen showing the MAGI had predicted a 78% possibility of Asuka being the Angel.

Misato felt her knees weaken as she almost fell on the ground. "No no no no no no…" She shot a glare at Ritsuko, "It's impossible! She's a normal teenager girl! She's not *that thing* !"

"As impossible as it seems, it's the most plausible conclusion."

"What are we going to do then?" Misato asked, her voice trembling. She had always hated Angels, but If that… *thing* was really Asuka,

she would have hesitated badly at making the decision.

"We are planning to use all 992 existing N2 mines to strike the target," Ritsuko said in a plain tone, not caring anything except the recovery of Unit D, "while simultaneously activating the AT-Field in Eva Unit 00. In a way that would disrupt the hypothetical circa that encloses the Angel's pocket interior. If we concentrate enough explosive power during that same microsecond, we can destroy the Angel and the Dirac sea along with it."

"But that would…" Misato felt a surge of anger shot up her body, "what about Shinji? There's no way he could survive that kind of blast!"

"I know." Ritsuko lowered her gaze to her feet. "The likelihood of Unit D's pilot surviving the assault is somewhere around zero point three three three percent according to the MAGI." She rose her head back to meet Misato's brown eyes. "However, our primary concern is destroying the Angel and retrieving the EVA. Under these conditions, the pilot's life is irrelevant."

The last sentence broke Misato's composure, causing her to instinctively pull her hand back and swing it across Ritsuko's face, and hard. Akagi rose her eyes back up to Misato, a tinge of anger in them. "It is your responsibility if Shinji dies, Major!" The venom was practically dripping from her mouth. "However, it is my responsibility to recover Unit D, no matter what the cost!"

Ritsuko felt Misato snag her collar, yanking her closer to the Major's face. "What is so God damn important about Unit D?!" This was just one of many questions that rang through Katsuragi's mind. One among those being why they were sheltering the monstrous abomination in Terminal Dogma. Ritsuko's eyes stabbed into Misato's. "You've been given all the information, Major!"

Although Misato hated the blonde as much as the Angels now, she had to admit Ritsuko was still the smartest person among NERV personnel. If no one else could come up with a plan, there's really no

point in arguing. However, the very thought of the possibility killing two of her kids in a single operation made her want to shred Adam inside Terminal Dogma to pieces, so that no one would get hurt.

'Mother, are you here? I'm Shinji.' Shinji tried to reach out to Unit D; he wanted to utilize this time to make things clear to his mother, so that in future battles, she would help him when needed.

Confusion.

'Mother, I know you can hear me. Listen, I know you are confused about the fact that I know you are here, it's because of what happened… back in my universe.'

Confusion. Need more.

'To put it simply, we failed. SEELE initiated Third Impact, and I was the trigger. Lilith gave me a second chance, and I was sent back here.'

Confusion. Fear.

'…? Ah, is it about my AT-Field? I… the power came with me; I don't know how it works… but I think it's a gift from Lilith.'

Comprehension.

Shinji suddenly felt his vision went white.

Shooting open his eyes, he found himself floating in vain, everything around him was white. Looking in front of him, his mother stood, a smile on her face. "It's been a long time, my darling."

"mother!" Shinji exclaimed in happiness, "I… I've missed you!"

"you know that no matter what, I'll always by your side, my darling."

Shinji was on the edge of tears, but he held back since he had important business to do. "Mother… I know what's gonna happen… and I'll need your help!"

"Sure, my darling. Hmmm… there's someone else in your mind, who is she, Shinji?"

Shinji blushed, "Oh… she's Asuka, the daughter of Kyoko… we are in love with each other."

"I'm so happy for you two, my darling. I was a friend of Kyoko, the moment Asuka was born I made a joke about you two coming together. But… how did she know I'm here? And I could feel her AT-Field as well. Is she… just like you?"

"You're right, mother. Just that she came back from a different universe."

"I see. She had to explain things to her mother once she had a chance as well. Anyways, I'm so happy to see you happy, and I'm truly sorry for what you've been through… It was never my intention to hurt you… just you know, I'll always love you, my darling."

"It's okay, mother… I forgive you… and I love you too, mother." Shinji made a content smile, "Now, let's get the hell out of here!"

"T-minus sixty seconds till mine drop." One of the pilots overhead announced as seven different aircraft squads started to soar over the sunken section of Tokyo-3. Unit 00 stood by as they watched the bombers get ready to make their run. As time passed, Misato felt more and more nervous. Just as she was about to order the N2 strike, suddenly she saw spiderweb-like cracks began to spread throughout the shadowy pool, blood-red illumination coming from the inside of them, LCL began to pour from the Dirac sea and a loud wail could be heard.

Up in the sky, the black and white sphere started to convulse. Its form began to shift, and a large bulge started to form on the side nearest to her. The stretching expanded farther and farther until it started reaching disgusting levels of expansion that it seemed unnatural for the floating orb to still be intact, and then it finally ripped. A giant mechanical arm punched through what could be called the skin of the sphere, causing a massive gush of blood-red LCL to spew all over the city below. Then from the puncture, a second arm emerged, widening the gaping hole even wider. Pulling the sphere apart, the two arms ripped a large gash into it and caused another gush of LCL to shoot outward. It looked exactly like Unit 01, but at the same time looked nothing like it at all. Its mouth was agape, and it made a bellowing roar as it further disfigured the Angel that had been holding it prisoner. Its slit eyes glowed a bright yellow that contrasted against the LCL that drenched its body.

Everyone on the command deck except Ritsuko inhaled deeply in fear. "Oh my god," Misato murmured, "Just what is an Eva?"

Misato felt a huge weight was lifted from her chest, knowing Shinji's alive and well. However, she couldn't bring herself to face him yet; she wasn't sure how Shinji would react to the news of him potentially killed Asuka. So instead of rushing to his bedside and hugging Shinji to death after she heard that he had awoken, Misato simply drove home and waited in the living room, immerged in her own thoughts. Section 2 would escort Shinji back, after all.

"Tadaima." Came Shinji's tired voice, which made Misato flinch. The time had come, and there's no running away from it.

"Shinji… I have something to tell you," Misato spoke as soon as Shinji sat down across the table, "just stay with me, okay?"

Shinji had no idea of what Misato was gonna say, so he decided to listen and not jump to any conclusions. "Do you know how did Asuka come back alive from the volcano?"

'Ah, more Asuka is the Angel crap again,' Shinji thought. But he was not ready to break the truth to Misato just yet. "N-no idea, Misato-san. I just accepted it."

Misato sighed heavily before taking a deep breath, "Shinji… she came back from a Dirac sea, the same thing that sucked you in and almost killed you yesterday."

Although Shinji already knew all this, he still felt confused about why Misato seemed so dreadful about telling him. "Uh-huh. So… apparently the Angel likes her more than me…"

Misato snapped, "Shinji! Listen!" Seeing she effectively got Shinji's attention, she continued, "there's a big chance of Asuka… being the Angel." She swallowed hard, waiting for Shinji's reaction.

'Ah, I get it now. It almost makes sense that they think it this way,' Shinji thought, 'and She's hesitant to tell me because she was afraid of me breaking down after me knowing I might have killed Asuka. But I still have to act innocent.' "wha… what do you mean, Misato-san? Asuka… was the Angel… that I killed today?" Shinji deliberately added trembling in his voice.

"I'm afraid so, Shinji…" Misato took a grab of Shinji's hand, trying her best to comfort him, "no, don't even think it's your fault! If she was really the Angel, we wouldn't have any choice! It was her or the rest of humanity!"

"I… I understand, Misato-san," Shinji sighed. Of course he understood, since he knew the Angel was not Asuka, and Asuka was alive and well. However, he didn't even dare to think what he would react if he didn't know these in advance. "I'd really like to have some rest, Misato-san…"

Misato sighed in relief. She didn't expect Shinji to take in the news so well; it was almost like he knew it was fake, just like last time he was told Asuka was dead. She couldn't help but grow suspicious; Shinji's reactions this time and last time were so much different from

the first time, and she didn't have a single clue. 'Maybe this kids' heart was so broken that he stopped feeling any pain,' she thought to herself.

AN: yes. Another chapter done. I have something planned for the fight with Bardiel. Till next time! (probably half a week.)

Chapter11: The Fourth and Fifth Children

AN: Another chapter done. You could probably guess what's changed from the title. And some of the technical details I wrote to fit in the plot, and create more drama. So don't be too serious about them. Leave a review!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 11: The Fourth and Fifth Children

SEELE 01: "Ikari, the loss of the Second Child at this stage is not in favor of our scenario!"

SEELE 04: "You should know that the Deas Sea Scrolls never predicted such an event; the Second Child was never meant to be an Angel or sorts. This indicates severe deviation from the scenario."

Ikari: "Indeed. I am aware of the situation. Dr. Akagi's reckless actions will be punished, and I will make sure the scenario proceeds as intended. We need to find a new pilot for Unit 02. Furthermore, Units 03 and 04 need pilots as well."

SEELE 05: "Based on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Unit 03 was meant to be taken by an Angel. I wonder who do you want to put in it?"

Ikari: "I have my candidate for both Unit 02 and Unit 03. The successful execution of the scenario requires a mental breakdown of my son; thus, putting one of his friends inside Unit 03 will suffice."

SEELE 11: "What's the progress on the Dummy Plug system, Gendo?"

Ikari: "Near completion. Dr. Akagi is doing final check-ups and it will be ready by the time."

SEELE 03: "But from what I've heard, it's still extremely unstable!"

Ikari: "Irrelevant. The Dummy Plug system will suffice its purpose in the current stage."

SEELE 01: "The time will come. Humanity's last step towards the ultimate evolution; We will not allow any discrepancies."

"Major Katsuragi, the interrogation against the litigant of this event, the Third Child, was denied by you." A voice said. The room was dark and small; the members of Human Instrumentality Committee sat around a table while Major Katsuragi stood in front of them. Those old men were apparently interested in the interactions between Angels and humans; they would never miss a chance to take a glimpse into it.

"Yes." Misato replied, her voice clear and determined, "he's very mentally unstable; I don't think it's a good idea to interrogate him here and now." Misato knew she was lying; Shinji was acting pretty normal these days; she doubted whether it was the real normal or Shinji was broken enough not to feel anything. Nonetheless, it was her job to protect her surrogate son from any possible harm, whether it's physical or not.

"Then I'll ask you, Major Katsuragi." Another voice said, "Was the Angel trying to contact humans?"

"The reports from our doctors say there was no sign of such contact," Misato replied, "We're deducing this event as fortuitous."

"How about his memories? If he remembered correctly…"

"I don't think his memories were affected by outside factors," Misato interrupted.

"But the AC recorder on the EVA had ceased functioning, how could you make sure of that?" the voice was becoming irritated, "how can we know whether the Angels were interested in human minds?"

"No offense, but I can't answer that," Misato said, "I don't even know whether they have their own minds, much less understand human minds."

The members decided to change the subject since they knew they were not getting anywhere with this determined Major, "Do we know whether the twelfth Angel is related in anyways with the next one?"

The expression on Misato's face softened; the old men finally decided to give her kids a break. "Negative. From the past patterns, the Angels never showed any sign of coordination."

"Right, they had been acting on their own." The voice said, "at least until now."

Misato's body tensed a bit. What were they implying by that statement? Would Angels attack in coordination in the future? It was already hard enough to fight one Angel at a time, facing two at once? Or even more? She didn't dare to imagine how that would turn out. "May I ask… what did you mean by that?"

"This is irrelevant to you. Now leave."

"Hai." Misato sighed, as a Major and the Director of Operations, she was still kept in the darkness. She couldn't help but think of the Angel at the basement inside Terminal Dogma; just how many secrets did NERV have?

Even though Tokyo-3 had been the epicenter of Angel attacks, surprisingly, its hospital received very few visitors. Often times those who came into its care were almost guaranteed to be in the morgue by the end of the night, so if anyone did come to 'visit' it was often to I.D. the bodies of the deceased.

Toji Suzuhara, the only visitor in Tokyo-3 Hospital, made his way down the nearly empty hall of the east wing. The nurses and Toji greeted to each other. The staff had grown to know Toji quite well

since his sister was admitted. Every day he would come to visit if he could. His kindness and generosity had not gone unnoticed by the staff. They tried their best to help his little sister; however, they could only do much due to the funding issues. His sister's conditions hadn't improved nor worsened ever since she was admitted.

Toji sighed as he gazed at the door to her hospital room. In truth, it hurt him every time he came here. It hurt him to see her tiny little body cooped up in a bed. She was a child. She was supposed to run around and play outside in the sun, not lie down for hours on end inside of an empty white room. Although his sister was strong, she couldn't help but become more and more depressed. Taking in yet another deep breath, he placed his hand on the doorknob and turned it. Facing her was like walking into an emotional battlefield. He had to keep a cheerful façade for her sake, but every time he saw her now, he just wanted to breakdown and cry.

Toji sighed heavily, and pushed the door open.

"Oh my God." Misato gasped, placing her hand over her mouth as she looked at the sight displayed on the monitor before her. The image showed a satellite photo of what was the American NERV Branch in Nevada, or all that remained of it for that matter. It looked like nothing more than a giant crater in the earth that spanned for well over a hundred kilometers.

Maya reported the details concerning the incident. They believe it was the S2 engine mounted in Unit 04 had caused such a catastrophic event. Though Misato didn't care that much about NERV's experimental technology outside of the weapons department, she had heard plenty about the S2 engine from Ritsuko, and what Dr. Akagi didn't disclose with her, Kaji filled her in on. By design it was meant to make the usage of umbilical cables obsolete. The S2 engine could theoretically power an Evangelion indefinitely, and also produce an infinite amount of energy output.

"We believe that during the activation test a Dirac sea formed, one not too dissimilar from the one we encountered with the previous Angel, and sucked in the entirety of NERV's Second Branch." Dr. Akagi explained. "Though Unit 04 was completely lost in the incident, the United States military was able to extract Unit 03."

"What are they going to do with Unit 03 without a NERV Branch to operate it from?" Misato crossed her arms and kept her gaze locked on the screen.

"It's going to become our problem, of course." Ritsuko handed a document to Misato, who read it carefully. It was clear that the United States wanted nothing to do with the EVAs anymore after the disaster.

"Wonderful." She sighed. "So now they're giving us a potentially unstable EVA Unit."

"Which is why its activation test will be at Matsushiro." Ritsuko said, "In that case we'll have time to react if anything goes wrong."

"You mean you've already found a pilot for it?" Misato raised her eyes to the doctor and gave her an inquisitive stare, cocking an eyebrow.

"Meet me in my office, we'll discuss it in more detail there." Akagi seemed almost dismissive of her question.

"I didn't receive a notification from the Marduk Institute."

"Like I said," Ritsuko narrowed her eyes slightly. "We'll discuss this in my office." Ritsuko said before turning back to the rest of the NERV staff, continuing her presentation on the Nevada incident. Misato shook her head as she looked back down at the document. Unit 03 and 04 were made to be a twin series, meaning that their programs and configurations were practically identical. Even if the activation test was done without using the S2 engine, the list of possibilities as

to what could go wrong was endless. Also the sudden discovery of the Fourth and Fifth Children didn't sit right with her either.

After a brief trip through the elevator and a few turns they found themselves in her rather small office. Even though she was the head scientist at NERV, it was a bit surprising that her office was so small.

"So why wasn't I informed that we found the Fourth and Fifth Children?" Misato couldn't even wait for the automatic door to shut all the way before asking.

"You will receive all the necessary paperwork in due time, Major Katsuragi." She replied, taking a seat at her desk. "All you need to know is that we have cores ready for them, and they will pilot Unit 02 and Unit 03."

"Well can you at least tell me who the pilots are?" She had always hated the phrase 'all you need to know.' She had been kept in the dark for so long.

"Of course." The blonde made a few rapid keystrokes, causing a new screen to come up. As soon as Misato laid her eyes upon the visage, they grew wide with shock.

"Them?!" She grabbed the back of Ritsuko's chair and brought her face closer to the monitor, unable to believe who she was looking at. "They are the Fourth and Fifth Children?!"

"Indeed." Dr. Akagi wasn't fazed at all. "They're in Shinji's class though. How is it that he of all people…" Ritsuko cut her off. "All of the students in Class 2-A are potential candidates for becoming EVA pilots. We thought it was best to keep them grouped together like this for the sake of ease."

"I can't believe this." The lavender-haired woman shook her head. "I don't know how Shinji would take it. We've already caused him so much pain, and now with Asuka gone, I just don't know…"

"I can't help it. Shinji just has to deal with this. We need these children to fight for humanity, and remember, no one forced them into piloting the Evangelions; they must do it on their free will." Seeing no more arguments coming from the Major, Ritsuko continued, "I'll be having a meeting with the Fourth and Fifth Children tomorrow. And the activation test is slated to be held three days from now."

"Understood." Misato sighed, lowering her head.

It's another normal day in Tokyo-3 First Municipal Junior High School.

"Toji, Suzuhara and Hikari, Horaki please report to the principal's office." The loud speaker echoed throughout the school just after the lunch bell rang. The entire class of 2-A threw their eyes their way, as if to ask them why he was being called there. The lanky teenager merely shrugged at them, knowing just as much as they did about this unexpected summoning. Hikari on the other hand, simply complied the request and left, of course dragging her boyfriend along with her. Though Toji didn't mind being the center of attention, he couldn't help but feel a little bit awkward with all these eyes watching him. Feeling uncomfortable about it all, he quickly made his way out of the door and into the hall, leaving the stares behind.

"You called us, Mr. Shimamoto?" Toji asked as he opened the door to the principal's office just next to the front lobby.

"Hello, Mr. Suzuhara, Hello, Ms. Horaki." The person sitting at the elderly principle's desk was not Mr. Shimamoto, but instead a lady he had never seen before in his life. She was a young woman, with attractive features and what Toji could only assume was dyed blonde hair, judging by her roots and brown eyebrows. Though she was admittedly pretty, he couldn't help but feel a daunting aura radiating from her. "Um," His eyes traced to his left and right, looking for the older gentleman that was the principal of the school. "Where is Mr. Shima-"

"Mr. Shimamoto isn't the one who called you." She pulled her hand out from behind the desk and extended it. "I did." Her tone seemed warm, but something about it didn't quite sit right with Toji as he extended his hand to shake hers. Hikari shook her hands as well, standing nervously beside Toji. "My name is Doctor Ritsuko Akagi. I work for NERV. It is a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Suzuhara and Ms. Horaki."

"It's nice to meet you too." Toji acted a bit more reserved than normal, not quite sure what was going on. "Is this about Shinji or Asuka? Haven't seen the Red Devil for weeks…"

"Yeah, could you tell us what's been going on? Is she okay?" Hikari followed, her tone concerning. It's been a long time since she had ever heard anything from her best friend; not even Shinji told her anything about Asuka. However, judging from Shinji's seemingly happy mental state recently, she was sure Asuka must've been okay.

"That's not our concern right now." She shook her head. "On the contrary, this is about you guys."

"Us?" Toji pointed to himself and Hikari, making a perplexed look. Surely it couldn't be that NERV wanted them to break up, right?

"Why don't you just go ahead and take a seat? We have a lot to talk about." Ritsuko pointed to a pair of chairs on the opposite side of the large wooden desk.

"What is all this about?" He asked, crossing his arms, forming a shield of sorts between him and Dr. Akagi.

"I'm going to be quite frank with you guys." Akagi clasped her hands together on the desk, and leaned back in her chair. "Toji, You have been selected as a potential recruit for Evangelion Unit 03. Hikari, you are selected as the pilot of Unit 02. Are you at all interested?"

Suzuhara went wide eyed for a moment, but then straightened up his expression. "Sorry, but no way." He shook his head. "I've been inside

one of those things before, and that was one time too many. And there's no way Im letting Hikari into this as well."

Hikari, on the other hand, had noticed something else. "Wait… Isn't Unit 02 Asuka's Unit? Why am I being selected to pilot it? How about Asuka?"

Ritsuko frowned faintly, letting out a sigh. "Pilot Soryu's… in a complicated condition. She's out of the roster for now. And Toji, you have a sister called Sakura, right?"

Toji felt himself jump back in his chair upon hearing the name. "H..how do you know about her?"

"NERV keeps tabs on all of its potential pilot candidates. Including their families." She explained, throwing a knowing look at the boy. "We also are well aware of your sister's current condition."

"Leave her out of this!" He stood up, causing Ritsuko to blink, but not flinch.

"Mr. Suzuhara," Akagi closed her eyes and kept a calm tone, raising her clasped hands from the table to just over her mouth before opening her eyes again. "we at NERV are well aware that the hospital she's located at is not exactly the best medical facility in the world She's been in the care of Tokyo-3 Hospital for months now and is showing no real signs of recovery. We can fix that, however."

Toji narrowed his eyes. "I'm listening."

"NERV has the best medical care facilities in the world. However, they are only available to NERV personnel and their families. Seeing as how you share no direct relation with anyone currently working at NERV, this makes us unable to accept Sakura into our care." Her eyes started to narrow just a little. "However, if you choose to become the pilot of Unit 03, then we can accept Sakura into our care, where she will receive the best medical treatment not even money can buy."

He fell back in his seat, and crossed his arms again. "You promise that she'll be taken care of?"

"Of course." Ritsuko smiled underneath her hands. She knew she had him on the hook. "You promise that even if something happens to me, you guys will keep treating her?"

"Any direct family to NERV personnel is always welcome at our medical facilities." She wasn't lying.

"Fine." He nodded. "I'll do it. But there's no way Im letting Hikari into this."

"Toji…" Hikari said, her voice soft but determined, "If you're going to this, then Im in as well. We'll look after each other, right? I'm not letting you fight without me!"

Toji looked into her eyes, "Hikari… you don't know how scary those things could be… last time I was in Shinji's EVA, that was not pleasant experience…"

"But… I'm sure Shinji and Rei will protect us, right?" Hikari said, "and Asuka… well, I don't know what happened to her, but I'm sure she'll support me as well. There's no need to argue, Toji. If you go, I'll come with you."

"But…" Toji trailed off and paused for a few seconds. He looked up into the ceiling, closing his eyes. Sighing heavily, he looked back at Hikari, "Fine. Remember Hikari, I will protect you, no matter what." Hikari just smiled in return.

"Good." Ritsuko said, pulling out an inch thick stack of papers from under the desk. "We'll need for you to sign this." Ritsuko thumbed through the pages, reaching the last one, and presented it to the couple. At the bottom of a wall of text, were blank lines. One for their signatures, the other for the date. As Ritsuko handed Toji a pen, he started to have a weary feeling about all this. However he didn't care what NERV did with him. He just wanted Sakura to get better, and

they could do that, so he signed right on the dotted line. Then he handed the pen to Hikari, who accepted with a shivering hand. She signed her name as well. All she cared about was to be there with Toji.

"Tadaima." Shinji entered the apartment, shaking off his shoes. Walking into the living room, he was taken aback to see Asuka sitting on the couch. "Wha-what are you doing here, Asuka? Misato could come home any moment!"

"Relax, Baka." Asuka said, her facial expression serious, "She won't come back yet; I want to use this time to talk about a few things. Now sit down."

Shinji complied and sat next to her. He took hold of her hand, and Asuka squeezed back to reassure him. "Shinji, I have an idea about how to deal with the next Angel. I plan to go in the entry plug of Unit 03 and extract whoever will be there, then you can kick its ass without holding back!" She paused for a few seconds, waiting for Shinji to say something. Her plan was very bold, and she didn't know whether it would work. But she felt she had to try.

Shinji thought about this for a while, "Asuka… you don't need to do this… this is so dangerous! What if the Angel trapped you as well? I couldn't fight with both of you in there!" Although Shinji care about Toji since he was his friend, but Asuka was apparently more important to him. He could fight Unit 03 and extract the plug with Toji being in it; he knew Toji could take mild injuries. However, if it's Asuka in it, he wouldn't want to even touch Unit 03's skin. The image of Asuka screaming in pain was enough to paralyze him while fighting.

"Hmph, do you not believe me? There's nothing that stops the great Asuka Langley Soryu!" Asuka cheered.

Shinji made a weak smile, "But… what if you…"

"Shut up! I promise you I won't!" Asuka snapped at him, "It's just some stupid Angel! At worst, I could always escape easily." Asuka quickly planted a kiss on Shinji's cheek, "Just… make sure no one else gets hurt, okay?"

"O-okay… I believe you, Asuka." Shinji sighed, "Please… please come back safe."

Misato came back to her apartment late at night. She was surprised to see Shinji was still up watching TV, but his eyes were unfocused. Clearly his mind was on something else. She didn't even get any type of acknowledgment of her entering the apartment from him, and that worried her. "Shinji. Shinji!" She raised her volume, which finally got his attention. "Uh… Ah! Hello! Misato-san."

"Shinji, I'll go to Matsushiro for a business trip for a few days. I'll let Kaji look after you. Hmmm… what's on your mind?" Misato asked, wanting to know why Shinji's been lost in his mind; she was afraid that it was about Asuka, since she had some big news concerning her today.

"Uh… nothing." He lied. His mind was still worrying about Asuka's bold plan against the next Angel. He had no idea about what might happen.

"You're not good at lying, Shinji." Misato sighed, "Tell me about it."

Shinji sighed as well; he knew he was not getting out of this. He quickly came up with an idea, though. "Hmmm… it's about Toji. He was selected as the Fourth Child, wasn't he?"

Misato blinked. She didn't know how Shinji got to know the news; maybe Toji told him? But if that's the case, why didn't Toji tell him about Hikari as well? But it was not important at that time. "Uh… yeah. He told you, didn't he?" Seeing Shinji nodded, she took a deep breath, "Shinji… they found another pilot for Unit 02. The Fifth Child."

Shinji's eyes twitched, taking aback by the information. This was not something old; he had never anticipated anything like this to happen. But it made sense, didn't it? After all, NERV wouldn't want a perfectly functioning EVA Unit to be wasted. "But, isn't Unit 02 Asuka's EVA? How will a new pilot be able to sync with it? And who is this new pilot, anyway?"

"The Fifth Child is… Hikari." Shinji gasped hearing this. "They are going adjust Unit 02's core profile to match her, so that she could sync with it properly."

Shinji didn't know what to think. Now they had two people to protect. No, three, counting Asuka. He had to make sure Toji and Asuka could get out safe, and if not, he had to fight Unit 03, knowing the people he cared would be hurt, as well as Hikari would be mad and hurt if anything happens to her precious boyfriend, not to mention he also had to prevent Hikari from being hurt physically by the Angel controlled Unit 03. She's new to both EVA and combat, after all. Suddenly the weight on his shoulders seemed to double, and he became extremely mentally exhausted. He really needed a goodnight's sleep.

Toji stood in the observation room, looking at Unit 02 nervously. Today Hikari would have her first activation test inside Unit 02. He couldn't help but feel bad about Asuka; he knew that she would go ballistic about anyone who dared to touch her precious Unit 02, even if it's her best friend. Asuka was nowhere to be seen, though, which means they were good for now.

Hikari had just walked out of the changing room. Her plug suit was not as fancy as Asuka's; it was a simple white and blue one, much like Rei's plug suit. It didn't help her plug suit to be less revealing, though. They both blushed as soon as Toji put his eye on Hikari's plug suit-wrapped body. Hikari quickly walked to the docking deck and got in the entry plug after some final exchange of reassuring words with Toji.

"Insert Entry Plug. Entry Plug inserted. Commence Entry Plug LCL injection. LCL filled. Establishing A10 connections. A-10 connections established and stable. All circuits are operational. Absolute Borderline passed. Stable synchronization established… sync rate holding steady at Thirty-six percent." Maya reported, a smile appearing on her face. "Evangelion Unit 02 activated."

"How do you feel, Hikari?" Ritsuko asked into the comms.

"It feels… warm," Hikari replied, "I feel very comfortable."

"Good. Your sync rate is above the threshold." Ritsuko said, "You can try to move around a little. Just think about how you would move your fingers without actually moving them, and the EVA will move."

And Hikari just did that. She concentrated her mind on moving her fingers. Suddenly Unit 02's fingers twitched a little. "Great! Now we'll give you some time to familiarize yourself with the controls."

1 hour later, Hikari could finally perform some basic movements with ease. "We'll call it today," Ritsuko said. "Cut the connections and eject the entry plug."

Hikari felt the entry plug went cold, and her connection with the EVA was cut off. The LCL drained and she exited the entry plug after the door opened. Hikari went directly to Toji, who smiled widely at her. "It's not that scary, after all." She said to Toji, "I'm sure you'll do just right."

"You did great there." Toji replied, his smile just grew wider, "I wonder how the Red Devil will react to the news that you'll have her Unit 02 from now on…"

Hikari had just realized the situation. "Oh… you're right. She was very possessive about her stuff. Even Shinji." Hikari sighed, "But I wonder where she is? I was actually expecting her to come to my activation test, since it was her EVA after all."

"No one tells us a thing," Toji said, irritated, "I mean, where could she go? She's not showing up at school, not at NERV… that leaves only her apartment!"

"Shinji's not here today as well… maybe he's with Asuka today."

"Man… they'ren't doin anything indecent, are they?" Toji smirked, which made Hikari giggle, "Toji! Don't say something like that!"

"ACHOO!" Shinji sneezed; he turned his head around just in time to avoid sneeze right into Asuka's face, who was making unhappy groans since their making out was broken. "What was that about?" Asuka asked. "I don't know." Shinji said, "It came so suddenly." Without more words, they continued making out on the couch.

Shinji laid in his futon with Kaji next to him. He was thankful that Asuka had taken the news of Hikari piloting Unit 02 well; she said she knew NERV would eventually find another pilot for Unit 02, and the only person she would allow for piloting Unit 02 was Hikari. Except for Shinji of course. Turning around to look at Kaji, Shinji felt he should say something to this unshaved triple spy; he knew this person was important to Asuka, and he didn't want to see Asuka hurt ever again. "Kaji-san… are you awake?"

"Yo, kiddo. Got something on your mind?" Kaji replied, his eyes focusing on the ceiling.

"Yes, Kaji-san…" Shinji had to think about somewhere to start that wouldn't sound so suspicious. He knew very well about the perceptiveness of the triple spy; any slip of words would definitely raise unwanted suspicion. "I wonder… what's my father's job?"

"Well, your father's commander of NERV, didn't you already know that?" Kaji answered, sounding confused.

"Yeah, but I feel there's more he's up to."

Kaji blinked. 'This kid is really perceptive,' he thought, 'I wonder whether I should tell him about SEELE? Probably not, it's a risk to him to just know this information.' "Really, that's all he does."

"Don't lie to me, Kaji-san." Shinji said, adding more force into his tone, "I know he has something big planned."

Kaji sighed. He had no idea why this kid was so insisted, nor where he got the feeling. He decided to give him a warning, hoping to scare off the kid. "Shinji, I'll be honest with you. You're getting to dangerous intel. These informa…"

"Not as dangerous as what you're doing, right Kaji-san?" Shinji was growing tired with this game. He carefully assessed the situation; surely he could trust Kaji to keep his secret, at least the time travel part, knowing the type of person Kaji was. Seeing Kaji's body tense up, he decided to have a go. "Kaji-san… I know a lot of things that I probably shouldn't know, like your job, and… SEELE… my father's plan…"

Kaji couldn't believe what he thought he had heard. He wasn't sure whether he should just silence Shinji right now, or listen to what he was to say. Hell, maybe he could even get some intel from Shinji. "Shinji… where do you get all of this information?" He said in a dangerously low tone.

Shinji sighed, "I… I can't tell you, yet. But you can ask me questions."

Kaji weighted his choices, and decided to continue talking. "Aight… I don't know how you know all these, but Im warning you, these intel could get you killed." Sighing, he thought about what questions he should ask. Suddenly an idea came to his mind. "If you know whether Asuka…"

This time it was Shinji who tensed up, hard. "K-k-k-Kaji-san, where did that come from?" Shinji interrupted, "we all know…"

"Shinji, I need you to be honest with me," Kaji said, "as impossible as it seems, our satellite picked up someone very similar to her in France days ago. I've got no idea how she got there, or she's still alive, but I feel this is something you'd know."

Shinji sighed heavily. He cursed internally about Asuka's carelessness, but what's done was done, and there's no running away from it anymore. His original plan seemed to backfire on him; he could do nothing but fall into the trap he set up for Kaji. "Yeah… she's alive…"

Kaji left out a relieved exhale, feeling a huge weight had been lifted up from his shoulders. Although he never had any romantic feelings toward Asuka, he had always cared for her almost as his own daughter, although she could be annoying sometimes. He was listless when he heard that she was dead, and he'd been so sad for days. Now hearing that Asuka's actually alive, although it sounded implausible, especially it's Shinji who said it, he still felt relieved more than ever. He wasn't sure why he believed Shinji, but he just felt he was telling the truth. "That's good to hear… Shinji." He still wanted to know how did Shinji know, "but how do you know? I mean, she's in France, how'd you communicate?"

"I… I…" Shinji sighed, "I can't tell you, either. Please understand, Kaji-san."

"Hmmm… fine then." He agreed to Shinji just for now, since he had other questions to ask. "Im curious about how much do you know about SEELE and your father's… plan?"

"As far as I know, they're planning to start Third Impact on their own," Shinji said, "so they can become gods of some sorts."

"Third… Impact?" Kaji blinked, "what's gonna happen then?"

"Everyone on earth would be dead, I guess…" Shinji decided to not give out too much detail for now; making things vague could still help

him not to blow his cover yet. "and Kaji-san, you're gonna die if you keep doing this…"

Kaji couldn't help but chuckle, "you sound like you've already seen me die before, so you know…"

'You don't know how right you are,' Shinji thought. "Just want you to be careful, Kaji-san…" Shinji rolled over so he's back now facing Kaji, indicating he's gonna end the conversation and go sleep. "Good night, Kaji-san…"

"Good night, Shinji-kun." Kaji said. However, he couldn't sleep yet. He was still immersed in his thoughts; today the boy called Shinji Ikari had proved to be a very interesting person, and Kaji wasn't going to let him go yet.

Matsushiro had always been a quiet place. However, today the silence was replaced by roars of heavy machinery and VTOL engines.

"Is the pilot ready?" Dr. Akagi looked over at one of the techs sitting next to her. "The pilot is ready." He answered.

"Alright." The blonde nodded, looking back at her terminal before doing one more check of Unit 03's system, ensuring that everything was ready for the activation test.

"Begin activation." The technicians started to carry out their various tasks, monitoring the EVA Unit as it came online. Its yellow eyes lit up and the sound of various machines in the observation room began to beep and chirp as they took in the readings from the Evangelion's performance.

"Synch level is rising." The technician sitting next to Ritsuko announced. "The pilot is approaching the borderline threshold."

Misato walked up next to Ritsuko and peered over her shoulder, watching as the synchrograph began to align and the red bars indicating the pilot's synch ratio started to light up. Within seconds of passing the threshold, Unit 03 fully coming to life, and every single alarm in the Matsushiro testing facility began to roar. Misato started frantically looking around the observation room, trying to identify the problem, but when she looked back at Dr. Akagi's terminal, it all became clear to her. The synchrograph began to drastically shift out of alignment, yet Toji's synch ratio continued to rise.

"Cut connection! Abort the test!" Ritsuko yelled. She had seen the same thing when Unit 00 went berserk.

"It's not shutting down!" Misato screamed as the giant robot pulled free from restraints. Unit 03's mouth restraints shattered into tiny little shards of metal, freeing its jaw and exposing its blocky red teeth. After that, everything went dark.

Toji found himself floating in the brightness. He had absolutely no idea about what happened. He only remembered getting into the entry plug, and waited for activation. Then everything went white. Shaking his head, Toji looked around and found nothing. Suddenly he heard a distant voice; or rather, the voice appeared in his head.

Become one with me… come… become one with me…

"Who the hell are you? Where am I?" Toji shouted.

You must become on with me…

"I am I, not you! You sick piece of trash!"

You have left me no choice…

Toji suddenly found himself standing in the hallway of a hospital. He wanted to feel confused, and he was, but he decided nothing could be weirder than the nothingness he had just experienced. He then

recognized the hospital was his sister's. He quickly ran down the hallway and found her room, and pushed the door open.

In the room Sakura lay in the bed, just like every time he had visited. Toji walked to her bedside and sat down, pulling his right hand up to caress her cheek. However, Sakura faded away before he could touch her.

Toji shot up from the chair, "What the hell?"

She will die if you don't become one with me…

"No! I don't believe you! You are just tricking my mind!" Toji shouted back angrily. The scene suddenly changed again, this time showing Hikari sitting inside Unit 02, a worried look on her face.

She will die as well if you don't become one with me…

"Who the fuck are you? Why are you showing me these?" Toji yelled, suddenly realized something. 'Hikari's in Unit 02, is she… ready to fight something? The only thing that needs an EVA to counter is an Angel… does that mean Hikari is facing an Angel? And this strange place… it's threatening me with Hikari… so maybe it's the Angel talking to me…' "No! I will not let you hurt her!"

There's nothing you can do… you Lilim are weak… become one with me…

"No! Get the fuck away from me!"

It seemed like the Angel was losing its patience, so it decided to use another approach. Toji suddenly felt pain surge through his entire body; the pain was nothing like what he felt before. Waves after waves of intolerable pain traveled through him. He started screaming.

I'll end your pain if you become one with me…

Toji wanted to retort, but he couldn't. The pain was excruciating. 'Can't… hold… much longer…' He thought, 'sorry… Hikari… sorry… Sakura… I think Im gonna give up…' Just as he was about to submit, suddenly the pain disappeared. He was extremely exhausted, and he felt like sleeping. The moment before he closed his eyes, he saw a swirl of red flashing in front of him.

"It's pattern orange." Hyuga spoke, looking up at the giant screen being projected in front of the Command Center's front deck, showing the black EVA Unit slowly trudging its way through the hilly countryside, making its way towards Tokyo-3. "We can't tell if it's an Angel or not."

"Plug ejection failed, something blocked it from ejecting," Maya reported.

"Unfortunate." Gendo, sitting in his office looking down the command deck, "Identify Unit 03 as the thirteenth Angel. Destroy it at all costs." His voice cold and firm

"But the pilots' still inside," Makoto said, "we should…"

"Irrelevant," Gendo snapped at him, "Destroying the Angel is our primary concern. The pilot's life is out of consideration. That is an order."

Inside Unit D, Shinji was grasping his control yokes tightly. In fact with his Angelic strength, the yoke was begging to crack. Standing beside him was Unit 02, with Hikari piloting it. Although she had only been training for two days, the Commander still sent her out in the field, hoping her to at least act as a distraction. Unit 00 stood farther away, holding a sniper rifle in its hands.

"Shinji… what's going on?" Hikari opened the communication channel with Unit D, her voice slightly trembling, "Are we fighting an Angel?"

"Yeah, Hikari… don't worry, I won't let it hurt you or Rei." Shinji said. He could only hope Asuka's plan will work. "Rei, any sign of the target yet?"

Rei's ghostly voice broke in. "I've found it." She spoke. "Look towards the sun."

Both pilots turned their EVAs towards the setting sun, where they could see a humanoid silhouette contrasted against the bright orange light of the sun. Its upper body was slouched forward, letting its arms dangle around its knees, and its steps were barely more than slow trudges.

"T… t… that's an EVA Unit!" Hikari stuttered. "That means that… Oh God." Her voice lower and lower, her hands shivering.

"Hikari!" Shinji barked. "Don't freak out right now! Is the pilot still inside?" He asked, trying to assess the situation.

"That isn't relevant." Commander Ikari answered.

"What the Hell do you mean it isn't relev-"

"You are not to concern yourselves with the Fourth Child." His voice grew a little sterner, "Unit 03 has been contaminated by the Thirteenth Angel, and as such needs to be destroyed at all costs. Is that understood."

"Wait," Makoto said, "I'm detecting another pattern orange inside Unit 03."

Gendo's eyes twitched. "Status report!"

"Pattern orange appeared 30 seconds ago," Makoto reported, "Wait! Pattern orange disappeared!… Huh?"

Before he could say anything, Maya continued, "Commander, we've lost pilots' life signs. He's gone."

"More like he disappeared…" Makoto murmured.

Shinji had been listening closely to the conversation that happened on the bridge through comms. He couldn't help but smile, since he knew she had succeeded.

Two minutes earlier

The moment Asuka came out of the sea of Dirac she felt a strange voice sounded in her head.

Hmmm… interesting… another Lilim…

She looked around and found Toji laying in his pilots' seat unconscious. She tried to reach out him and get him outta there, however she was blocked by an invisible wall.

Stupid… you Lilim are so weak… you come here just for nothing… you will become on with me as well…

Asuka let out a half laugh. "Heh, listen up you sick ass stupid bastard, I'm gonna show you!" She quickly expanded her AT-Field, which collided with Bardiel's. The sheer force of collision started to make the entry plug vibrate. Asuka didn't know how strong her AT-Field could be, so she summoned all of her willpower to concentrate.

"Arghhhhh!" Asuka roared angrily. Her AT-Field was increasing in power, however it still seemed insufficient to completely erode Bardiel's.

Although the Angel's AT-Field was stronger, it couldn't overpower Asuka that easily. In fact, they were in a stalemate. Bardiel decided to take another approach.

Asuka suddenly felt pain coming from her left foot. Lowering her head, she saw erosive tendrils forming around her left foot; Bardiel wanted to physically contaminated Asuka, or at least force her out of

there. Asuka screamed in pain; knowing there weren't many options left, she wandered into her mental world and searched for her darkest memories.

The nature of an AT-Field was your mental barrier, the place where no one shall enter freely. In order to create stronger AT-Fields while inside an EVA, NERV needed to find pilots who shut themselves from the world. Asuka's mentality had been steadily improving ever since she had been with Shinji; but instead of opening up to the world completely, she had simply built a new barrier around two of them. Now though, in order to increase the power of her AT-Field, her college-graduate-level-intelligence told her she needed to close her heart for the moment. The fastest way to do so was to… remember her darkest memories.

'I'm strong… I'm strong…' Asuka kept telling herself that while she recalled those horrible memories, loneliness, pain, angst, all these emotions surged through her mind.

Then she recalled the day Shinji and her first kissed. Determination surged through her mind.

Asuka lifted her head. Her eyes glowing bright blue.

Bardiel's AT-Field shattered like cheap glass.

She took a firm hold on Toji's wrist, dragged him out of the seat with ease.

What… impossible… how?

"Because I'm the great Asuka Langley Soryu, you little Scheiße!" Asuka soon called out the sea of Dirac, "now enjoy what's waiting for you!" She threw Toji's unconscious body into the darkness, moments later she entered it as well.

Outside in the field, Unit D's pilot smiled as he saw Unit 03 stopped moving forward, almost like hesitating. 'Great work, Asuka.' He

thought. "Rei! Cover me!"

"Roger." Rei said, she immediately began firing. A single armor piercing round flew toward Unit 03, but before it could make any contact, it was stopped by Bardiel's AT-Field.

Before she could pull the trigger again, Unit 03 pushed its hands towards the ground, projecting an AT-Field as it did so. With the force of the AT-Field, it shot itself up about two hundred meters into the air and avoided the incoming bullet. The blue-haired pilot managed to let out a gasp before the black Angel came crashing down onto her. It buried its good knee into the back of Unit 00, sending it crumbling down into a prone position while Unit 03's hands firmly grasped both of its arms. Then the real pain came. Unit 03 tightened its grip around Unit 00's arms, sending little tendrils of contamination through the EVA's body, crawling under its skin. Rei screamed and squirmed in an effort to writhe out of the Angel's grasp, but the blinding pain kept her from being able to even attempt to fight back.

Unit 03 looked up to see its approaching opponent Unit D, its arms still locked around Unit 00. The Angel made one firm jerking motion, pulling both of Unit 00's arms off with ease, making a loud crack and snap as it did so. Followed by this was a bloodcurdling scream from its pilot. Inside Unit D, Shinji could feel his heart drop even further as her cries of pain echoed through his ears. By the time Shinji reached the Angel, it was already back on its feet. In his charge, he lunged the knife forward, aiming for where Unit 03's core would be. The black creature shifted to the side, avoiding the attack, but not avoiding the second slash from Unit D, cutting into its narrow abdomen. LCL started to drip from the wound, the dark red contrasting strongly with its black armor. "Die, you bastard!" He made a downward swing, only for the Angel to leap back and skid its feet against the grassy ground, shooting a cloud of dirt up into the air. He rushed forward and delivered a hard punch to the gut, causing Unit 03 to lurch forward, revealing the back of its neck. Ikari looked down to see that Toji's Entry Plug was still inside it; he

decided to at least keep its shape intact, so later when Asuka send Toji back they'll have excuse for Toji's survival. Shinji quickly deployed an AT-Field to stop Unit 03 in its tracks. Though it would only hinder the Angel momentarily, it did give Shinji enough time to assess the situation. Before he could come up with a good plan, Unit 03 ripped through his AT-Field and continued its charge with a roar. Knowing that he had to keep moving, Shinji leaped upwards, letting the Angel rush right past him. Once the EVA landed, the ground around him began to tremble, and he found himself standing directly behind Unit 03. Now was his chance. In one quick motion, Unit 01 dashed forward and dug its knee into the center of the Angel's back, knocking it flat on its face while he pressed it down with all of his weight. The black Evangelion squirmed and writhed, trying to shake him off, but Shinji stood firmly. "Stop moving!" He growled, delivering a hard elbow to the back of Unit 03's head, causing it to tense up in pain. Frustrated, Ikari bashed his elbow against the back of the Angel's head again, and again, and again. Each blow caused it to bellow out in pain. After the final hit, the Evangelion ceased its resistance.

During the entire time of the battle, Unit 02 simply stood there and watched. Seeing the fight was now over, Hikari's trembling voice came in the comms "S-S-Shinji, i-is it o-over?"

"Don't worry, Hikari. It's all over now. And I'm sure Toji is fine." During the fight Shinji made sure to at least keep the entry plug structurally intact, so that it would be more convincing that Toji survived the fight. Shinji knelt down and pulled out the entry plug from Unit 03, carried it to a safe place and gently put it down. A group of rescuers came and cut the entry plug open. LCL poured out.

"We found the pilot," one of the rescuers reported to the command deck, "… life sighs normal. Pilot unconscious."

Everyone let out a big sigh of relief hearing the news. As impossible as it seems, Toji survived the 13th Angel. No one cared about the sudden disappearance of life signs during the battle or the strange

pattern orange; maybe Ritsuko would pay attention to it, but she was still unconscious caused by the explosion in Matsushiro.

Commander Ikari tensed up hearing the report. In his scenario his son was supposed to at least hurt Toji badly so he would be consumed by his guilt, a step towards his mental breakdown. However now it seems nothing is working as anticipated. He couldn't understand why his son showed not a bit of hesitation when fighting Unit 03. He was supposed to freeze up since he shouldn't want to hurt the pilot, wasn't he? Furthermore, the death of the Second Child seemed to have no effect on his mental state. Curious.

Misato's eyes fluttered open, at first being blinded by a bright light beaming down on her face, contrasting strongly against the night sky. As she came to, she was able to make out the silhouette of a man leaning over her. His long hair flowed behind him as his ponytail blew in the wind. Even though the floodlights behind him made it impossible to see his features, Katsuragi already knew who it was. "Kaji…" She spoke wearily, trying to lean up, only to feel a sharp stabbing sensation shoot through her left arm. She grimaced in pain, falling back down to the stretcher she was laying on while Kaji crouched down to her level.

"You hurt your arm pretty badly in the explosion." His soft voice was the just the thing she needed to hear, especially since the last thing she could remember was hearing Unit 03's head splitting roar when it went berserk and broke free of its restraints. Unit 03… "Oh God!" She shot up again, this time ignoring the pain in her arm. "Toji! Is he alright?!"

"He's physically okay, still unconscious. No one else was hurt. Shinji overpowered Unit 03 and secured the entry plug."

Misato smiled, feeling proud of her kid.

Toji slowly opened his eyes; after his eyes had adjusted from the sudden increase in brightness, he found himself staring at an unfamiliar ceiling. 'Guess I'm still alive,' He thought, 'wonder what happened… the last thing I remember is floating in brightness…' Toji groaned, trying to move around a little, but he felt weight pressed on his body. Turning his head, he saw dark brown hair and two pigtails. 'Hikari…' Toji smiled, 'I'm glad you're okay…'

The sleeping brunette jerked a little and made some sleepy noises. She slowly turned her head just to look directly into Toji's eyes.

"Toji! You're awake!" Hikari exclaimed in joyfulness, but the next moment tears rolled out, "Oh my god… I was so worried… I-I thought…"

Toji smiled weakly, "It's okay Hikari… I'm here now."

"Glad to see you okay, Toji." Toji looked in the direction of the voice, found Shinji standing at the door. "Yo, Shin-man… glad to see you okay too…" Toji shook his head, trying to clear his mind, "what happened to me?"

"There was an Angel inside Unit 03," Shinji replied, walking into the ward and sat down at bedside, "it took control of the EVA and attacked us. I killed the Angel and got you out."

"Thanks a lot, Shin-man… you saved my life, again." Toji couldn't express how grateful he was, so he simply patted Shinji's shoulder. "Uh… you're welcome? I mean, you're my friend; I'd look after you when I can, right?"

Toji felt his tears threatened to come out, but he suppressed them. He felt a man like him wasn't supposed to cry like that. "Just… thanks…"

"What do you remember, by the way?" Shinji wanted to know whether Toji was aware of what actually happened; he didn't want Toji to know the truth about him and Asuka yet.

"Errr… I remember being in the entry plug, and then I was floating in brightness. I could see nothin but white. Then… I think the Angel was talking to me. He wanted to become one with me… I refused, so it wanted to force me by pain, and I passed out… then woke up here." Toji recalled, leaving out unnecessary details. He didn't want Hikari to know the horrible things the Angel had shown him.

Shinji felt relieved and let out a sigh. "Okay… I'm glad I killed it just in time…"

Asuka was waiting anxiously in the apartment. Toji still had to stay in the hospital for a while since they need to make sure he was clear of contamination, and Misato was injured and Kaji had to look after her so there's some time for her and Shinji to spend in the apartment alone. She was in a good mood; after all she had faced one of the most troublesome Angels face to face and fought it with *bare hands,* and she had successfully finished her job. She had never felt so strong before; her ego was flying to the sky. But she was still worried about the next Angel, since she couldn't pilot Unit 02 this time. She was worried about Hikari; apparently without proper training she would be slaughtered by Zeruel, and she didn't want her best friend to be hurt.

"Tadaima." Shinji's voice came from the door.

"Shinji!" Asuka cried happily, running to the door and gave him a fierce hug. Shinji could only return it happily. "Asuka! I knew you're the best!"

"What do you expect, Baka-Shinji?" Asuka pulled over from the hug eventually, keeping a big smile on her face, "I fought the stupid Angel with my bare hands! It never stood a chance against the great Asuka Langley Soryu!"

Shinji chuckled. It felt good to see Asuka being so confident and prideful. He remembered the main reasons of Asuka being depressed in his timeline was because her pride was hurt badly by

her defeat against the Angels. It wasn't that she wasn't good enough; she was simply unlucky. She had thought her defeat against the 14th and 15th Angel was because she was weak, while the truth was no one else could do better if put into the same situation. "Asuka, what do we do about the next one? You can't pilot Unit 02 or Unit D or they'll be suspicious!"

Asuka thought about this for a while, and sighed. "I honestly don't know… I'll watch closely, tho. Just don't get destroyed too quickly so I'll have to save your ass! And don't let Hikari get hurt, you understood?"

"Jawohl Mein Führer!" Shinji mocked, "Errr… how much time do we have?"

"Hmph. Probably several hours. What, getting any pervy ideas on your mind?" Asuka said in a teasing tone.

Shinji blushed a little, "Wha-No! Errr, I mean, yes, but… what I wanted to do was to make you some German dishes, since I know you must've been missing these…"

Asuka smiled widely, "Good. You're right, I haven't eaten for a long time… I'd really like to taste some of my boyfriend's great cooking!"

Without a word Shinji went to kitchen, got out some ingredients and started cooking. He was to make some Sauerkraut and baked Schnitzel. Asuka had lent a hand so that the dishes could be prepared faster. After 30 minutes or so the food was ready and the couple enjoyed it in silence.

"Hmmm… that's so good Shinji," Asuka said after literally licking her plate clear, content expression on her face. "And now… I'm still kinda *hungry* ." She stressed the last word and looked into Shinji's eyes with passion.

Shinji at first didn't understand what she meant; he thought she wanted to eat something else. However, looking into her eyes, he

realized she meant *that* . "Ah… I'll wash the dishes first?"

"Ooh, I think you forgot something, Shinji…" Asuka said, suddenly grabbing his wrist and pulled him over. "that you're MINE!"

AN: ah, a relatively long chapter. Asuka deserves some highlight moments after everything I've put her through, doesn't she? Well, there will be more! Next chapter she had to blow her cover. See ya in half a week.

A Woman's Battle

AN: from the title you could probably guess who this chapter is mainly about. :/

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 12: A Woman's Battle

Asuka wandered aimlessly around a particular rural area in Germany. This place she had visited before when she was only 3 years old; her mother took her on a field trip there. They had a wonderful picnic; Asuka truly enjoyed that experience. It was one of the happiest moments in her life before her mother's absorption into Unit 02. She had always wanted to see her mother again inside Unit 02, however before she could get a proper chance the incident with Unit D happened, and she was forced to hide herself from NERV. She was becoming increasingly impatient with the whole hiding thing; she only wanted to spend more time with Shinji and see her mother again. Now thought, knowing NERV had changed the core of Unit 02 to match Hikari, the chance of seeing her mother again had become almost impossible. She simply wished her revelation to NERV could come earlier, but of course she didn't know what NERV would do to her. 'Probably dissect me or something,' Asuka thought. Sighing, she approached her destination. Asuka had been wearing some thick clothes, a hat, and sunglasses. Not only because of the weather - her S2 organ could produce enough heat to keep her warm, but also to hide herself from possible satellite scans after Shinji told her about it.

The weather that day could only be described as impeccable for Asuka. Blue sky with scattered clouds, the wind was gentle and comforting. A comfortable 10 degrees Celsius temperature, although kinda low for ordinary people but effectively calms Asuka down from all of her thoughts on recent events and frustration. Unable to be

with Shinji was casing her anxiety; she had never thought she could need someone so much before. She had lived a lonely life for almost 10 years which was filled with endless training and sync tests. She had been telling herself that she needed no one, and she had kept that mentality until she had met Kaji.

Kaji had been so gentle and caring for her; his behavior had no second thought behind them; unlike most people at her same age, they only wanted to come near to her for their own selfish reasons; no one cared her for her only. Asuka knew it clearly, so she had pushed everyone away. Kaji was someone completely different; he cared for her without second thoughts because he saw her as his surrogate daughter. He was the closest person to be called a family in Asuka's eyes. Since Asuka had never experienced this kind of love ever since her mother died, and added the reason she wanted to grow up so that no one would see her as weak, she had naturally confused romantic love and her feelings toward Kaji. Now looking back, she could only laugh at her childish behaviors; she also knew that Kaji would never lay his hands on her, which was the main reason Asuka wasn't afraid to be physically close to Kaji.

As for Shinji, he was another completely different type. At first Asuka thought Shinji was just another pervert like every boy at his age; he was also weak and coward, which Asuka hated the most. However living with him for so long she had learned that Shinji was nothing but gentle, kind, and caring. He was so modest to the extent that almost drove her insane. He dived into a volcano to save her against orders. No one had ever done anything like that before. It also made her realize although she didn't want any help, she needed it. Then she only wanted help from people who were better than her; as an EVA pilot and college graduate, it seemed like only Shinji in the whole world could fall into that category. Although he was still wimpy in daily life, the determination and courage he could show when inside an EVA amazed Asuka. Aside from his personality, their childhood traumas were so similar that they seemed like created from the same model. No one else in the world could ever understand what they've been through; not to mention piloting the

EVAs. So naturally their uncertain feelings toward each other soon became something much deeper. Even love wasn't enough to fully describe it; the two most broken persons found the other half that made them as a whole.

Asuka finally found the same tree she had had the picnic with her mother and father. Smiling, she laid down on the grass and stared at the sky. Forgetting about all uncertainties with the future, at that moment, she simply wanted to enjoy her life.

However, this peacefulness was soon interrupted by a voice, a voice she immediately recognized from a person she loathed.

"Yo, isn't that Soryu?" a male voice sounded, "hey guys, look at who's there?"

Asuka frowned. She knew the person; his name was Otto, a bully from her college. She had absolutely zero interest in anyone in the college; she knew those boys wanted nothing but to get into women's panties. Although at that time she was only twelve years old, her body was developed enough for some of the males to look at her funny. Otto being one of them. He never had any chance to do anything, though. Aside from Asuka's awareness of personal safety, Section 2 had been keeping her away from any potential harm.

The group of males was approaching her slowly. 'Mein Gott how unlucky,' Asuka thought, 'do I have to come here and relax just to accidentally run into these morons? So fucking unfortunate.' She didn't have time to deal with the group of bullies, nor she wanted to. Asuka swiftly got up and began walking away.

For Otto and his group of bullies it was a surprise for them as well; last time when he was trying to bug Soryu Section 2 had made sure he wouldn't even think about doing it again. However today he saw no one around in his peripheral vision; they were at a very open area and he could see no one else except Soryu and his' friends'. So he decided to take the chance. "Hey, where're ya goin, Soryu?" He eyed

his companies who immediately understood his intentions and quickly formed a circle around Asuka.

Asuka looked around her. Each one of the bullies was scanning her and it made her cringe. She hated these perverted gazes.

Otto walked closer to her, "Soryu where's your bodyguards heh? How about we have some fun together? You won't regret it…" He carried an evil grin when saying those words.

'What's this emotion I'm feeling right now?' Asuka thought. True to her thoughts, she wasn't feeling anything that a girl should feel under this type of situation; not hatred, not anger, not fear, not even flinch.

She felt *amusement.*

"Leave me alone, so I promise you can go home alive," Asuka said coldly. In fact she was laughing internally. She'd never thought she could have a chance for revenge.

The group of bullies first look at each other dumbfounded, then burst out laughing. "Very funny, Soryu. There're six of us one of you, and you're nothing but a helpless little girl…" Otto said, "Just make it easy for us so we won't hurt you so much…"

Asuka sighed. Surely she could just disappear into Dirac sea but she couldn't leave any live witnesses. If she had to fight them it means she had to display her Angelic powers which also leads to the same situation. In fact, the moment they decided to come to her, they were sentenced to death. Asuka didn't want to kill anyone; although she had killed a lot of Angels, killing a person was still very difficult for her.

Asuka decided to just stand there and wait for them to make their first move. Then she would decide how to deal with them based on their actions.

A few seconds passed and Otto obviously started to lose patience. He didn't know why but he felt very uncomfortable with the atmosphere. Looking into Soryu's eyes he nearly flinched at the murderous look she held. But she was only a helpless girl, right?

Otto swallowed hard and summoned all his courage to walk in front of Soryu and tried to grab her arm.

Seeing there's no way out, Asuka had made her decision. 'Maybe I'll just beat this guy senseless and it will scare the rest off. This way I don't need to kill anybody and I can also get out of this.'

Having Angelic powers also means faster reaction time and more sensitivity to surroundings. In her eyes Otto's movements were like slow motion. Asuka dodged his arm and turned her body around. With the momentum, she delivered a roundhouse kick straight into Otto's lower abdomen. The speed of the kick was almost two times faster than professional martial artists thanks to her inhuman strength. Otto was sent flying backward and landed hard on his back 15 meters away. Blood poured out of his mouth.

The other five bullies fell silent for a minute, astonished. Maybe they were shocked by the fact that this seemingly helpless girl almost killed their leader in one kick, or they saw her eyes seemed to be glowing.

"You..you monster!" One of the bullies cried, suddenly pulled out a pistol and aimed at Asuka. Without hesitation he fired his gun and didn't stop until he emptied the whole magazine. Asuka assessed the trajectory of the bullets carefully. Four of them will miss her, five of them will hit her arms or legs. These she could deal with without using her AT-Field. She could heal the wounds pretty quickly after all. However the last buttle was coming straight for her head. She couldn't take the risk.

Within a fraction of a millisecond a flash of orange appeared in front of her, while all 10 bullets bounced off the invisible wall harmlessly. 'Great,' she thought, 'now my plan actually backfires at me.'

"Wha-what a-are you?" Another bully stammered out. He was the only one still standing; every other bully had already fallen to the ground, their eyes widened in fear.

"I told you to leave me alone," Asuka said in an indifferent tone, "now you've left me no choice." Asuka had never spoken like this; she was surprised by herself. Shaking her head to get rid of her thoughts, she decided at least she could give these morons some fair treatment while preventing them from saying anything to the outside world.

It's only been two days after the fight with Bardiel; NERV was still busy trying to clean up the battlefield. They managed to recover Unit 03's core but the EVA was damaged so badly that it would be out of the roster for a very long time. Misato sat in front of a row of monitors that surveillance the world for anomalies.

Just as she was about to drift into sleep after staring at the screen for 2 hours, an alarm went off. Misato jerked her head up; her sleepiness was gone completely. "What is it?" She shouted, "What's wrong?"

"Major, we've detected a pattern orange!" Makoto reported, "and… weird." He paused for a second, "It's in Germany."

"Huh? Are you sure?" Misato felt confused. Only Angels or EVAs could appear as pattern orange, and until now every single Angel had appeared near Tokyo-3 or heading for it. So if it was not an Angel, is it possible that Germany was secretly developing some new type of unregistered EVA unit?

"Yes, ma'am," Makoto said, "Oryx 103 is scanning the area."

The satellite image was being transferred to the screen. On the image it showed a bloody corpse lying face up on the ground. Everyone gasped at the sight. "Pattern orange disappeared." Makoto said.

"Do we have recordings?" Misato asked.

"Yes, ma'am. Bringing up recordings." The recorded video had a much worse quality since the satellite had limited storage, and even so only 30 seconds of videos could be kept and anything earlier than that was deleted.

From the video one could only see seven distinct figures. One lying on the ground and one were dragging the other five to the same place. Then the six of them disappeared simultaneously, leaving the man lying on the ground slowly bled to death.

"Wha-what happened?" Misato asked, her right hand covering her mouth. She had no idea of what she saw, but one thing was certain that it was some kind of supernatural power. Just as she was wandering in her own thoughts, the Angel alarm sounded.

"Pattern Blue confirmed!" Aoba shouted, "It's an Angel!"

Naturally people on the command deck thought it had something to do with the pattern orange before. "Where're our pilots?" Misato forced her to suppress her thoughts, "what's the location of the Angel?"

"The Angel had already breached Gora Absolute Defense Line!" Makoto reported, "It's coming towards the Geofront!"

"Holy shit! Its AT-Field Strength is breaking the roof!" Aoba yelled.

"Damn it! Where's Shinji and Rei?" Misato demanded, "We need the EVAs deployed, right now!"

Shinji had been anticipating the attack, so he had already changed into his plug suit. Rei on the other hand was still lying in her hospital bed, still recovering from phantom pain. "We've located the Third Child! He just came out from the changing room and heading towards EVA cages!"

Considering the events occurring on the surface, Misato found the Command Center to be strangely in order, albeit very tense. Every single one of the technicians were doing their job with precise expertise, demonstrating why they had achieved such a high position in NERV. "OH MY GOD!" Aoba called. "The Angel took out eighteen layers of armour in one shot! It's only be a matter of time until it breaches the GeoFront!"

"Shit." Misato hissed, looking at the screen of Hyuga's terminal. "We won't have time to get Unit D onto the surface in time. Send him to the GeoFront. She'll have to confront the Angel in front of Headquarters!"

"Roger." He replied, punching in a code to set the EVA's destination. Once Shinji had activated Unit D, he slammed down on the red button of his terminal, shooting the Crimson-Purple-ish Evangelion from the cages into a series of shafts until it finally emerged in front of the pyramid, the iconic symbol that NERV had become so closely associated with.

Suddenly there was a loud rumbling sound that came from the surface, which could even be heard from the depths of Central Dogma, causing the entire Command Center to shake violently. Everyone looked around at one another, trying to find the source of the sudden tremor, only for Aoba to announce it to everyone. "The Angel has breached the GeoFront!" He exclaimed, his eyes wide. "It's making its way towards Headquarters!"

"Fuck!" Misato looked up at the giant holographic projection of the GeoFront hovering before the entire Command Center, spotting the blue dot near the top of the hologram slowly making its way down to the red one at the bottom. "What's the situation with Unit 00? Can we use the Dummy Plug system?!" She kept her eyes on the hologram. "I don't want Shinji fighting that thing alone!"

"Not good! Unit 00 is rejecting the Dummy Plug!" Aoba said.

"Shit! Not now of all this time!" Misato cursed, "Shinji! What's your status!"

"I'm ready!" Shinji's voice came from the comms, while grabbing a multi-barrel gatling gun aiming at the descending Angel. Without hesitation he pulled the trigger. A rain of armour piercing shells flew at near sonic speed toward the Angel, each bouncing helplessly off its AT-Field. Shinji had already expected this. With a frustrated groan he dropped the gun and sprinted toward it. Pulling out his prog knife at the same time Shinji summoned an AT-Field trying to erode the Angel's. He didn't know how strong an AT-Field Unit D could produce but there were no other options.

The Angel's eyes flashed red, Shinji quickly ducked to the side, still took a good hit of the blast. Unit D was sent flying backward and crashed down on the ground. Groaning in pain, Shinji willed Unit D to stand up. The Angel folded its ribbon like arms, and they shot forward in blinding speed. Having expected the attack, Shinji made a sidestep and the EVA managed to dodge the deadly attack by mere meters.

Seeing this as his chance, Shinji tried to grab one of its arms. However the Angel reacted faster and retreated them while slicing several fingers off Unit D's right hand. Shinji cried in pain as he felt exactly what the EVA felt. He needed to fight with more caution and less recklessness.

"Send Rei out in Unit 00." Gendo ordered. Misato's head reared back at her superior. "But Unit 00 isn't fully repaired yet! It's still missing its left arm, and the right one hasn't even fully regenerated yet!"

"I'm aware of this." The Commander replied. "But we don't have any other options, unless you want to send the Fifth Child into the battle."

The lavender haired woman growled under her breath, feeling the need to protest his orders. Sending Hikari into the battle was not much different from telling her to suicide.

"It's okay." A ghostly voice came from Maya's terminal, catching the Major's attention. "I can be replaced if need be."

Misato felt a hollowness in her chest upon hearing the girl's rather bleak words. However the adrenaline kept her moving and kept her from dwelling on Rei's choice to face the Angel with such a severe handicap. "Fine." She conceded. "But please try not to get yourself killed, okay?"

"Roger." Her voice sounded weak.

Outside the NERV HQ, Shinji was struggling to dodge the Angel's deadly attacks, while getting closer and closer to his target. Seeing the eyes of the Angel lit up again, he dashed forward to dodge the blast while closing his distance with it. The Angel rose its silver ribbons again, this time taking aim at Unit D's head. With his Angelic instincts and his synch ratio at its peak, Shinji ducked down just in the nick of time to avoid the potentially fatal blow, and continued his charge. By the time the Angel was able to retract its arms, Unit D was already within the range to successfully weaken its AT-Field. Pulling up his prog knife, Shinji summoned all of his strength and stab it down on the Angel, aiming to the core. The Angel increased its AT-Field strength just in time to block the blow. However it knew the AT-Field wouldn't hold long. Taking advantage of Shinji's lack of attention to his surroundings since he was focused on his knife and AT-Field, the Angel shot its arms toward Unit D's legs, successfully slicing off its left leg, and badly damaged the right.

Shinji screamed in pain and let go of the knife. The Angel gave him no time to catch his breath and retracted its arms; during the process the bottom two arms of Unit D - the two Shinji was controlling - were also sliced off.

Due to the high sync ratio the pain was unbearable. Shinji almost passed out from it and was using all his willpower to stay focused. The Angel continued its assault; grabbing the right leg of Unit D, it swung the EVA away. Unit D flew off several hundred meters and almost crashed against NERV HQ.

"Arghhhh…" Shinji groaned in pain; then he saw an almost armless Unit 00 with only part of its right arm regenerated. It's holding a black cylindrical object in its hands.

Inside of Unit 00's Entry Plug, Rei bravely charged Unit 00 forward, keeping the N2 mine tucked as close to her as possible. The cockpit quickly became filled with objections from the crew members inside of the Command Center, seeing what she was doing. However, the blue haired girl ignored all their qualms, pressing forward anyways. Even if she died in all this, then at least she could die knowing that she saved Shinji, the person who had shown her true kindness. The Angel rose up its silver ribbons again, shooting them towards Unit 00, only for it to sidestep both of attacks.

As Unit 00 drew closer to the Angel, it quickly attempted to raise its AT-Field. Unable to hold Unit 00 back, it quickly started to lower the shield over its damaged core to cover itself from Unit 00's suicide attack as it tackled the Angel, placing the N2 mine as close to its core as possible. The moment before the mine made contact with the core the Angel closed the eyelid like armour around it. Rei kept the explosion confined into a smaller area using her own AT Field, keeping all of the civilians, as well as those in NERV Headquarters safe from the blast.

"Rei!" Shinji screamed, running towards the explosion. Once the dust settled, Unit 00 remained barely standing, its armor severely burnt and damaged. The Angel on the other hand still stood strong, its body unharmed by the suicide attack. However its core now looked like it was just one good hit away from shattering completely.

Leaving all other five unconscious bullies on a remote island, Asuka felt satisfied with her decision and entered her Dirac sea. She was worried about the fight with Zeruel. It was one of the most powerful Angels; although she trusted Shinji could handle it just fine, she couldn't help but wanted to check on the battle. She knew it would be risky that she could be discovered, but it would be worth it if she could actually do something to help Shinji.

The Angel ignored the motionless Unit 00 and floated towards Unit D. Standing in front of the helpless EVA, the Angel rose one of its ribbon arms up to Unit D's face and took hold of it by completely wrapping up its head before tossing it onto the side of the pyramid. With Unit D down, the Angel rose up from the ground and began to hover towards its opponent. After taking a moment to examine the Evangelion, it shot a ribbon forward, slicing the chest plate off of the EVA, exposing a glowing red core in its lower abdomen.

"Oh no…" Dr. Akagi held her hand over her mouth. "It's exposed the core!" Misato shrieked. "It's going to destroy Unit D!"

As if on cue, the Angel began shooting its ribbon arms forward in succession, aiming each hit for Unit 01's core. Each hit made the giant mech tremble as the cracks on its core grew more and more prominent until the cracks began to turn into fissures. There was no way that it would be able to withstand any more punishment before breaking, at which point Unit D would be lost forever.

Shinji couldn't do anything with the two bottom arms severed and two legs severed or damaged. He closed his eyes as the cracks began spreading across his entry plug. 'I'm sorry Asuka,' he thought, 'It seems like I can't keep my promise…'

Just as the supposed final blow was about to hit Unit D's core, the two upper arms suddenly reached out and blocked the final strike from its opponent. With its powerful AT-Field, the ribbon was sliced to bits by Unit D's fingers, without so much as damaging the Evangelion in the slightest. It then took hold of the ribbon in a tight grasp and jerked the Angel towards it, bringing its skeletal face nose to nose with it.

The Angel felt fear. It didn't like the feeling.

"What happened?!" Misato asked, "how did the upper arms move without a pilot in the left entry plug?"

"Actually…" Makoto said, "we've detected life signs in the left entry plug."

"How possible? Did Shinji move into the left plug?"

"No, ma'am." Maya said, her voice slightly trembling as she looked at the video feed, "its… its…"

Everyone watched in awe as Maya brought up the video feed to the main screen.

Red hair. Blue eyes. Slim body. No doubt it's her.

"Shinji! Shinji! Are you okay! Answer me damn it!" The familiar voice came from the comms.

"ASUKA!" Misato shouted first as the realization came down on her, "but… how?"

Unit D pushed the Angel down and began slamming its fists into its core. The core cracked more. Slam. Slam. Slam. Crack. However the gigantic humanoid suddenly stopped moving just as the supposed final blow was about to hit.

The power had run out.

"No no no no no!" Asuka cried, as she shook the control yoke violently, "not now! God damn move you stupid thing!"

The Angel remained motionless for a moment, as if wondering why its opponent stopped attacking. Realizing that now was a prime opportunity to take the offensive, it quickly regained its balance and floated up.

The people on the command deck were so confused as so many things happened in such a short period of time. At first it was the feeling of dread as they thought Unit D was about to be destroyed. Then it's the confusion of a supposedly dead Asuka's appearance.

Just as they were to get their hopes up, Unit D ran out of power. Now they simply didn't know what to feel anymore.

"No!" Katsuragi screamed. "This can't be happening!"

"Wait!" Ritsuko said, "Unit D reactivated!"

True to her words, Unit D's eyes lit up once again.

"But how?" "It's using the S2 organ!"

Misato was dumbstruck. "how did it get an S2 organ? Germany didn't…"

"It was Ireul," Ritsuko said calmly, "during the time when Ireul possessed Unit D, it must've grown an S2 organ inside it."

Inside the left entry plug Asuka suddenly felt a surge of power through her body. The Angel's eyes lit up again. However the energy beam was blocked fully by Unit D's exponentially more powerful AT-Field. With a vicious swing of the arm, the Angel was almost cut in half with its AT-Field shattered like thin paper, and the core finally gave in.

The Angel exploded into a ball of fire while Unit D held its AT-Field to protect the people inside Geofront.

Shinji finally felt his pain subsided to a bearable level, and looked around him. His entry plug was still intact albeit the multiple cracks spread across it. Looking at the left side he saw…

"Asuka!" Shinji exclaimed, "you… I…"

"yes I saved your sorry ass dummkopf," Asuka said rather angrily, "and now they all saw me! This is all your fault! If you'd defeat the Angel I didn't have to expose myself!"

"Sorry," Shinji said, "but I'm just glad… I thought I was gonna die…"

"Hmph, you're not dying on my watch, Baka. And you promised never to leave me, remember?"

Shinji let out a soft chuckle, "yes ma'am…" Shinji felt like sleeping as the adrenaline left his veins, and he passed out easily despite the shouting from the redhead.

Asuka sighed heavily. 'Now I'll have to deal with NERV great. I wonder if I can make up a believable lie?' The entry plug ejected and the hatch was opened. She was still wearing the sweatshirt and it was soaked with LCL. She needed a shower hurriedly. However the moment she stepped out the entry plug she was pointed by at least 10 lasers shooting from MP5 submachine guns. "Pilot Soryu," one of the soldiers said, "You're under custody. Please come with us."

A group of investigators and doctors from NERV Berlin came to the sight of the last pattern orange. They took samples from the body and examined the surroundings.

Misato walked hurriedly down the hallway to the First Cranial Nerve ward that Asuka was in, fighting back her tears. She had called Kaji who was watering his melons and now hurrying to NERV HQ as well. It was Ritsuko who gave the recommendation to lock Asuka down and keep her sedated and the Commander had approved it. The Commander's head almost fell off his clasped hands the moment he saw the video feed showing Asuka inside the entry plug. This girl never ceased to surprise people, right?

Looking into the ward Asuka was restrained to the bed, her clothes were changed into a hospital gown. "Asuka! Are you awake?" Misato called out. Asuka showed no signs of recognition as she was still sedated heavily; the only sign showing her alive were the beeps of the machines monitoring her vitals.

"I'm… glad to see you okay," Misato paused for a few seconds since she couldn't know whether she was more shocked or happy to see

her alive and well. "I'm telling Shinji…"

"No." Ritsuko suddenly appeared and snapped Misato, "there's no way she could just come back like this. Don't forget this is the second time she came back from death. The only reason I can think of is…"

"I don't give a fuck about your theories!" Misato cried, anger surging through her body, "I just want my kids back!"

"Even if she's an Angel?"

"NO! SHE'S NOT AN ANGEL!"

Ritsuko shook her head, "Major, you really need to think rationally instead of letting emotions take over you." She took out her PDA and handed it to Misato, "remember the pattern orange we discovered just before the fight with Zeruel?" Seeing Misato nodding, she continued, "they extracted DNA traces that match Asuka's perfectly around the area. And now she's here. The whole thing just doesn't make any sense."

"But the reality is she's now here alive and well, right?" Misato was surprised to see the report, but kept her composure nonetheless, "I'd say we'll just accept it. Like Shinji does."

"Not before I ran some tests on her." Ritsuko said, seeing Misato's eyes twitched she added, "I'm not going to dissect her or something. At least she'll be a valuable specimen to us."

"I'm not letting you touch my kid, Doctor!" Misato was practically fuming, "I'll kill you if you dare do any harm to her!"

Ritsuko signed. "Fine. At least let me do some physical examination and a full brain scan."

"M-Misato-san!" Shinji's voice suddenly came from the end of the hallway. Running towards her Shinji said, "I-I-wanna see Asuka!"

"Shinji calm down, she's unconscious cuz she's sedated," Misato said, "it's for… safety measures."

Although Shinji knew Asuka was okay, he still wanted to make sure NERV didn't do any harm on her after she was locked down. Seeing Asuka lying on the bed peacefully, although restrained, Shinji let out a sigh of relief. "M-Misato-san, what are you going to do to her? Why the restraints?"

"For now just some physical checks and brain scans. As for the restraint…" Misato paused for a few seconds and sighed, "we… believe she exhibited supernatural powers and we had to take precautions."

Of course Shinji knew what those 'supernatural powers' meant. He knew Asuka appeared in the entry plug from nowhere while everybody else thought she was dead. It seemed like he needed to tell Misato the truth sooner than later.

"I believe the scenario is being threatened, Ikari. The Second Child was not meant to be an Angel. We don't know how things will move on from now on. I need you to take drastic actions to ensure the progression of the scenario." Whenever Keel Lorenz held a private meeting with him he knew something must be very wrong.

Gendo knew things were deviating farther and farther from his plans. In his scenario, the Second Child was supposed to be defeated by Zeruel effortlessly so she would be ego-bashed hard. And then the fifteenth Angel would destroy her completely. Her mental state would also affect his son. Now it seemed like not only she was likely to be an Angel but also her confidence would be boosted since she had just saved the day. Gendo didn't like things out of his control. Indeed he needed to take drastic actions. "I am aware of the situation. The only option left now is to erase the Second Child while making it look believable." He smiled evilly under his clasped hands. No one escapes his control.

AN: Sorry about the short chapter. But I updated this just a day after the last one, didn't I? The next chapter will fill in more details and unanswered questions. Seeya later.

Beyond the Heart

AN; Now the story officially progressed to a more depressing part of Evangelion, so there won't be WAFFy content for a while. Spare some of the technical details in this chapter. There's also some light humor here. Leave a review!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 13: Beyond the Heart

Asuka slowly opened her eyes; her eyes quickly adjusted to the blinding light. 'Unfamiliar ceiling, must in a hospital.' She first tried to move around a little, but she felt a strange weight on her limbs and waist. 'And it's cold like metal,' she thought. Looking around her, she quickly recognized the room was the same one she had been put into after she came out of the volcano. Then her gaze fixed on her arms, just to find bold metal restraints locking her in the bed. 'So I'm restrained. That's why I couldn't move my body. But why? Oh…' She then remembered the fight with Zeruel and when she came out of the entry plug, she was taken into custody by armed guards. 'They must've noticed something. Just Great.'

"I see you're awake." A female voice came.

Following the voice, Asuka turned her head around and saw blonde hair. "Doctor Akagi," she said weakly, suppressing her anger, Asuka continued, "what… the hell is this about?"

"Merely safety measures," Ritsuko said in a monotonous tone, "for now I'd like to ask a few questions." Surely there would be a full-scale interrogation later on, and she had the feeling that Asuka would probably never be allowed to get out of this room ever again. However, Ritsuko would like to ask a few questions for… her personal interest.

"Hmph, why should I comply? You don't trust me and putting these stupid locks on me and expect me to trust you? You're so full of it."

Ritsuko sighed. She already knew this German redhead was a pain in the butt to deal with. However, another benefit of knowing Asuka's mentality granted her an unfair advantage in situations like this. "It's up to you whether you comply or not. After all, you're the most expandable pilot. Even the First Child holds more purpose than you. You know I could just get rid of you and never have to deal with you again." Ritsuko grinned internally; attacking Asuka's pride was the fastest way to get a reaction from her.

However she was dumbstruck to see Asuka simply chuckled. "Ye, you're probably right. I'm just a goddamn tool just like how the Commander treats you. Ha, even the First Child stands at a higher place than you in his heart, Doctor Akagi." The truth was Asuka would have been hurt badly if it was her old self. However, now she had already grown up and almost got rid of her childish behaviors; she also learned a lot during Instrumentality and from Shinji, such as the relationship between Ritsuko and Gendo.

Asuka couldn't help but felt amused when she saw Ritsuko's face contorted. Ritsuko had absolutely no idea of how Asuka, of all people, knew what she had been doing with the Commander, or the fact that he saw Rei above her. 'Stupid clones… I'll destroy you, blue-haired bitch…' Although Ritsuko was fuming, her scientific brain told her to calm down. Indeed it was not a good time to argue with Asuka, who somehow had not been affected by the slightest by her well-calculated attack and retaliated successfully; not to mention the promising possibility of Asuka being an Angel, which wasn't probably a good opponent to fight against. She had a more urgent job to do after all.

Taking several deep breaths to calm herself down, Ritsuko finally said, "Asuka, we don't have to argue here. Just answer me a few questions and I'll leave you alone. Don't you want that?"

Truth was Asuka indeed wanted to be left alone at that time. After carefully assessing her options, she decided it wouldn't hurt to at least listen to what the blonde bitch had to ask. "Whatever. Just ask and get over with it."

Ritsuko had so many questions in her head. Of course, she wanted to simply ask whether Asuka was an Angel or not, but she kinda already knew what answer she would get, and she didn't expect Asuka to be honest with her. Also, these kinds of questions could save for later during the formal interrogation. "Asuka, we've noticed you could trigger a pattern orange. We don't know whatever you have is transferrable… if it is well… regarding Shinji…"

"Transferrable? What the hell does that even mean? And how in the world does this have anything to do with Shinji?" Asuka felt genuinely confused, but she had a bad feeling about what was to come.

"What I wanted to say is, we suspect these… powers you have, we're afraid of they could've been transferred through the… exchange of body fluids, so I have to know whether you've been physically intimate wi-"

Asuka now understood where she was getting at. "WHAT? WHAT MADE YOU THINK ABOUT THAT? AS IF I'D EVER-" Truth was she indeed had been 'physically intimate' with Shinji and he was the only person she ever allowed to be that close to her except Kaji, but she simply felt the question was too unexpected so her reflex took over and immediately denied it.

"But from your physical examination, I've noticed… certain changes to your body since your arrival in Japan," Ritsuko interrupted her, "And the only person I could think of is him since you two had been close to each other and you live in the same apartment. If it's not Shinji, then this could be much more complicated."

Asuka sighed in defeat. How could she forget that Ritsuko was a scientist? There were many ways to know what she had done

without asking her directly. "Fine. Yes I've done it with Shinji. So what? It's not like…" Asuka trailed off as a scary realization came to her, "YOU ARE NOT PLANNING TO RESTRAIN HIM AS WELL ARE YOU? BECAUSE IF YES I SWARE TO GOD-"

"QUIET!" Ritsuko demanded; she added more force into it than she intended, but it had achieved the desired outcome, which was to shut Asuka up, though the true reason she stopped yelling was she realized she was paranoid. The old Asuka wouldn't do it, though. Seeing Asuka stopped talking and seemingly waiting for her to continue, Ritsuko said, "we'll be closely monitoring the behavior of the Third Child, but we don't plan to restrain him. He still had value as a pilot and since you'll be out of the roster for a while we can't afford to lose another pilot." Taking another deep breath, she continued, "however if he exhibits any sign of contamination we'll have no choice but restrain him as well."

'I'm not gonna kill this bitch because they'll eliminate me if I use my Angelic powers, and Shinji will be hurt. I'm doing this for Shinji only. It's for Shinji. For Shinji. Shinji.' Asuka effectively prevented herself from breaking through the restraints using her AT-Field and strangle the woman in front of her by thinking about Shinji. However, she didn't know how long she could control her anger if she kept talking to Ritsuko. So instead of throwing insults like she had always done, she simply closed her eyes and said, "Whatever. Now leave me alone."

Seeing she had already gotten the answer she wanted, and the redhead clearly showed no more interest in talking, Ritsuko sighed and left the ward.

SEELE 01: "Ikari, what's the status of the Second Child? Are we sure she is an Angel?"

Ikari: "Doctor Akagi had performed numerous tests on her, all of them showed no anomalies, both physically and mentally. However she could indeed trigger a pattern orange."

SEELE 03: "Is it possible that she just happens to have some supernatural power?"

SEELE 09: "The Dead Sea Scrolls predicted no such things. Supernatural powers? Do you think this is some kind of science fiction we live in?"

Ikari: "There are still too much about the second child we don't know yet. However I plan to move her back into Unit 02."

SEELE 11: "Are you insane Ikari? What if she's an Angel? And why wouldn't she pilot Unit D?"

Ikari: "The Second Child showed no sign of being drawn to Adam or Lilith. We didn't have any problems before as well."

SEELE 02: "That's before she knew we knew about her powers! Now her cover's blown who knows what she would do!"

Ikari: "I have my own considerations about putting her back into Unit 02. I shall have the Second Child erased when the time fits." Gendo grinned evilly under his clasped hands again.

SEELE 03: "How would you do that? If she happens to be an Angel, how'd you kill her? Step on her with an EVA? I doubt any of your pilots would do that."

Ikari: "Like I said, the Second Child will be erased when the time fits. And It will come as a surprise."

SEELE 04: "What about Agent Ryoji? He's getting to dangerous information."

Ikari: "I will have him erased as well after his final mission."

SEELE 01: "Good. Prepare to receive the Sixth Child, Ikari. He shall arrive in a month." Keel Lorenz shut off the hologram and leaned back against his chair. The uncertainties that happened before forced him to awake Tabris much earlier than he intended; he was

about to send him to NERV HQ before the thirteenth Angel to pilot the unoccupied Unit 02. However, the discovery of the Fifth Child Hikari Horaki filled in the blank, so he took back the decision. Now the reappearance of the Second Child added more uncertainty into his scenario. He could only hope Gendo Ikari could execute his plan successfully.

Shinji felt so uneasy sitting in the backseat of Misato's RA A310. Part of it was because of her crazy driving style; then there was the situation regarding Asuka; he was afraid that NERV would do some horrible experiments on her. And he was also worried about Kaji. If he remembered correctly, Kaji would soon be eliminated by some killer sent by Gendo or SEELE. He had to prevent that from happening.

After they entered the apartment, Misato double-checked the lock and safety and closed every window of the apartment. Then she dragged Shinji to the living room and order him to sit down. Shinji complied, but he was confused to see the frown had never left Misato's face. "Is there anything wrong, Misato-san?"

Misato was wandering around the living room, her hands on her hips. "I need you to be honest with me, Shinji."

'Ah, and there's also this,' Shinji thought, 'how could I forget I should tell Misato the truth…' "Y-yes, Misato-san."

Misato took a deep breath, "Shinji… you've always known that Asuka was alive, right?" She had always been wondering why Shinji was not depressed after Asuka's supposed death, now through her deductive reasoning, the answer was obvious.

Shinji sighed, "errr, you could say that Misato-san."

"Why didn't you tell me about this earlier?" Misato sounded hurt; she thought she was trusted by Shinji, however if it was the case why he didn't even bother to tell her the truth?

"I-I've actually told you, Misato-san…" Indeed he had told her he 'knew she was alive,' but he didn't give any evidence or reasons. "I, errr, at that time, I couldn't tell you how I knew, though."

"Why? Don't you trust me?"

"I trust you, I really do, Misato-san. You, Asuka, Rei, and Kaji are the only people I really trust." Shinji paused for a few seconds, "but the truth may be too difficult to accept for you. Even for Asuka, it was hard."

"Shinji, I don't care how hard it is to accept, I've already experienced so many things that seemed impossible. I just want an explanation how Asuka survived."

"Misato-san, what I'm going to tell you… you have to brace yourself." Shinji took a deep breath. Seeing Misato nod, Shinji continued, "Misato-san, will you believe me if I say… that Asuka and I are from the future?"

Misato blinked. Of course it made sense since Asuka and Shinji seemed so knowledgeable about what would happen, and there was also the synchronization training thing. But it was still a shock to hear it from Shinji. Looking straight into Shinji's cobalt eyes, Misato said, "Sh-Shinji, promise you're not joking."

"I'm not, Misato-san," Shinji said with a serious look in his eyes, "I'm being truthful for every single word I say now."

"I guess that explains a lot of things… but how did you get here actually?"

"It's a long story…"

"I'm listening."

"Well, I'll start from the next Angel…" Shinji swallowed, trying to shake off unpleasant memories, "it's called Arael. It sits in orbit and

none of our weapons could reach and kill it. And… it… Asuka…" he took a deep breath, "it destroyed her mind."

Misato gasped, "Oh gods… Shinji…"

"it's okay… I was there t-to comfort and s-support her, and she recovered rather quickly." Shinji smiled weakly, "and the next one… Armisael… it looks like a double helix, and… it tried to biofuse with our EVA… and ourselves." Shinji paused for a second, "it was Rei… she self-destructed to kill the Angel."

"I-I'm really sorry to hear that…" Although she didn't know Ayanami very well before, Misato became more and more acquainted with her since her relocation. "I… we'll not let that happen this time, right?"

"Right," Shinji replied, "then it's the last Angel, Tabris. Or… the Fif-Sixth Child, Kaworu Nagisa."

"Wait, Sixth Child? He's one of our pilots?" Misato was surprised that NERV could be infiltrated by an Angel disguised as a pilot; she thought the process of selecting pilots was very rigorous.

"Well… actually he's sent here by SEELE… do you know about SEELE, Misato-san?"

"SEELE… I've heard about it, the real men controlling NERV and Human Instrumentality Committee, right?" Misato tried to recall what Kaji told her.

"Right. Simply saying they're bad people…"

"But why would they send an Angel to NERV, the very place we've been trying to keep Angels… oh. Where Angels die."

"That's right, Misato-san. They send him here to weaken our defenses… so that they could defeat us with ease."

Misato was dumbfounded, "wha-why? Why would they attack NERV?"

"So apparently SEELE wanted to start Third Impact…"

"Third… Impact?"

"Yeah, and they plan to initiate the Third Impact of their own version, so that they could become gods or something. However, after Third Impact apparently Lilith found me and gave me a second chance, and she sent me here."

"Lilith? The second Angel? And what actually happened during Third Impact?"

"Yeah… Lilith is the white giant in Central Dogma…"

"Wait, I thought it was Adam they put in there."

"No, it was Lilith, Adam is in my father's possession right now."

"Wha… why? Why would the Commander possess the first Angel? And how does he do it?"

"Thanks to Kaji, he gave the embryo of Adam to him. And my father had his own plan of… Instrumentality, which is Third Impact, to unite with my mother. In order to do so he need Adam under his control."

"Kaji… you bastard…" Misato's lips were trembling; she couldn't believe thethe man he loved and trusted would bring the thing that killed her dad and could cause humanity's extinction to the very person who plans on doing so.

"D-Don't blame him, Misato-san, he had his job or they'll kill him." Shinji sighed heavily; the truth was he himself wasn't even sure why did Kaji brought Adam to his father. Probably it was as simple as following orders. "… And during Third Impact everyone on earth would be turned into LCL, and all souls would return to the Black Moon. There wouldn't be any difference between people, we all become one. SEELE sees this as the ultimate evolution of humanity."

"Fine… this is a lot to take in at once…" Misato rubbed her forehead, "spare the technical details for now. So what about Asuka? Did she come with you?"

"No, she's from a different… universe, you could say. I was in the center of Third Impact so Lilith could give me another chance. In Asuka's universe, apparently she was in the center."

"But… isn't this a bit coincidental?"

"Yeah it is, but it did happen… so I guess just accepted it."

"But if she's from another… universe, how did you, errr, come together so smoothly?"

"Because… we l-love each other, even across universes, Misato-san." Shinji said with determination in his eyes.

"That's good to hear, Shinji. Gosh, I wish I could have something like that… But… that still doesn't explain how did she survive."

"Well, you see… when we traveled here, something happened to us which we don't know of, and we… hmmm… we just happen to… to…" Shinji stammered, not sure whether he should say it.

"Let me guess, you were given certain powers."

Shinji sighed, "yeah… actually, we have Angelic powers."

Misato gasped. Her eyes widened in fear, her right hand subconsciously reached for her pistol. "Wha-what d-do you mean by Ange-Angelic power, Shinji?"

"No! Misato-san, it's not what you think! We are not Angels! And we won't do what Angels do!"

Misato's brain was running at full power. She could accept the fact that Shinji and Asuka traveled back in time, but Angelic powers? She had always loathed Angels; she would take every chance possible to

dismember them. Now the person sitting in front of her, her surrogate son, happened to at least have the same powers that Angels have. What did this mean?

Thinking rationally, Misato knew Shinji and Asuka couldn't be Angels. Hell, they killed so many Angels themselves. But the fact that two of her kids that she loved had Angelic powers, which she hated, was simply too much to take in.

"So… Asuka… used her… powers, to…"

"Y-yes, Misato-san. That's how she survived."

"Oh gods my head… I really need some rest now…" Misato washed her face with her hands, "Shinji… what you told me today was… really disturbing… but the good thing is I trust you. I guess you were right about not telling me earlier… I trusted NERV that time, and I would probably report you to them… now I knew they kept too many secrets from me, I don't trust them anymore. And… I know there's still something else you wanna tell me, right?" Seeing Shinji nod slowly, she continued, "okay… but I really need to digest all the crap you told me right now…" Exhaling heavily, Misato stood up and went to grab a whole pack of beers and entered her room, leaving Shinji alone in the living room thinking about what he should do next.

'It's about time,' Shinji thought, 'I'll not let you die this time, Kaji-san.' Luckily Shinji knew exactly where to find the triple spy. Shinji grinned widely as he saw the man standing in the middle of the melon field and watering.

"I've gotta say, Kaji-san," Kaji turned around to see Shinji approaching; he put down the hose, little drips of water still pouring from its mouth. "I never did take you for the gardening type."

"Well, everyone needs a hobby." He shrugged, sprinkling one last batch of melons before cutting the pressure. "I appreciate you want

to chat with me. I have to admit it does get a little bit lonely being out here all by myself sometimes."

"It's not a problem." He replied as calmly as he could. "I've got something important to tell you."

"We need to make another stop first." Shinji narrowed his eyes, looking over at Kaji. He wasn't about to be tricked into helping him run more errands. Kaji seemed to catch onto Ikari's concerns, and quickly loosened his expression to reassure him. "Don't worry." He waved his hand off to the side. "I always like to go out for rice cakes afterward."

Shinji kept his eyes fixed on him, waiting to hear specification if they were going out for rice cakes, or if he was just going to be tagging along to watch Kaji eat them. "It's my treat." He said with a genuine grin. Shrugging, Shinji felt he had to reason to refuse. Once the two stepped into his car and buckled up, Kaji began driving down the fairly unused roads of the GeoFront.

"We need to discuss things in my car. Bugs are everywhere inside the Geofront. Here I can make sure we won't get eavesdropped." Kaji spoke, keeping one hand on the steering wheel, and the other rested on the console.

"Yeah." Shinji nodded, his voice just a little more than a whisper. "Kaji-san, how about you ask me questions? I-I don't know where to start."

His eyes glanced over at Shinji for a brief moment before turning back to the road. "Shinji, now I do trust you; earlier, you told me Asuka was alive, honestly part of me didn't believe you. Now seeing her suddenly appeared from nowhere, I know you've got something to tell me. So my first question would be, where was she all this time?"

So Shinji told him about the time travel and the sea of Dirac, came along with their Angelic powers. Although the triple agent had braced

himself for shocking information, he still found himself stunned. However, he took the Angelic powers part surprisingly well, since he kinda already suspected that, and didn't feel threatened by the fact. "I guess this explains a lot… so, we failed and Third Impact happened. Honestly I'm already suspecting SEELE would do something like this from the intel I gathered." Taking another deep breath, he continued, "that night you said… I'm gonna die if I keep doing this. My speculation is I did die in your timeline."

"Y-you are right, Kaji-san. And… I know what you mean to Asuka, and I don't want to see her hurt. So… please don't die, Kaji-san. I can tell everything you want to know, just…" Shinji said with a pleading look in his eyes.

The long-haired man remained quiet for a moment, thinking of a good way to respond. "Shinji, I appreciate your care. However, it's already too late for me. I'm pretty sure they will get rid of me after my current assignment."

"Kaji," Shinji spoke after a brief moment of stillness between the two. "What is your assignment? Maybe I can help you… with my powers."

Ryoji blinked, taken back by the unexpected offer of the otherwise shy boy. "I guess it wouldn't hurt if I tell you since you already know too much… so SEELE wanted me to kidnap Sub-Commander Fuyutsuki so they could interrogate him, and I did. Now I'll extract him… after this, I'm sure they'll want me dead. I don't know how you may help without your cover blown."

Ikari turned back to the wall, watching the lights as they rose the last thirty or so meters to the surface. "Kaji-san… think about it this way. You're being paranoid; what's the point of rescuing him anyway?"

"Probably to make amend for what I've done…" Kaji threw his gaze forward as the setting sun peaked through while the lift carried them up to the surface. He narrowed his eyes slightly, both to block out the intense light of the sun, and to also express his own frustration with

seeking out the truth. Now that he knew what he had always wanted to know, he wasn't dying with regrets. Or… was he?

"What about Misato? What about Asuka?" Shinji said forcefully, "If you're not doing this for yourself, do it for them! Don't be so selfish, Kaji-san! I care about them, I love them, Kaji-san! I don't want them to be hurt! Last time after you died… Misato… was…"

Kaji suddenly couldn't see him in the eyes. "Maybe you're right, Shinji-kun. But I think they're better off without me. My job could bring them danger."

Shinji sighed. 'Even if you're not accepting my help, I'll just do it anyway.' He thought quietly, turning his gaze to the road.

After Kaji had sent him back to the apartment, Shinji went directly for Rei.

"Come in." Shinji heard after he pressed the doorbell. Using the spare keycard to open the door and entering the apartment, Shinji found Rei sitting firmly on the sofa, her crimson eyes staring at him, which seemed to penetrate his soul. "Um, Hello, Rei."

"Shinji-kun."

"Rei, I-I have something to tell you, it's important," Shinji and Asuka had been discussing the role of Ayanami during Third Impact; they wanted to convince Rei not to fuse with Lilith, and they would find a way to defeat all MP EVAs so Instrumentality won't happen at all. "I, hmmm, do you know what my father plans to do with you?"

Rei was taken aback by the sudden question. She had been aware of the Angelic powers that Shinji and Asuka possessed, however she didn't expect anyone other than Commander Ikari or maybe Fuyutsuki or Ritsuko to know her true purpose, much less her origins. She had a vague idea of what the Commander would do with her, and she before she was willing to do whatever the older Ikari

would want her to do since he was the reason of her existence. She had no other purposes. In retrospect, Shinji and Asuka had been taking care of her since their visit to her old apartment that day; she felt ambivalent about whether she should continue to trust Commander Ikari or her fellow pilots. Without the drugs she could experience many new emotions, many of them she regarded as pleasant, and all of these came from Shinji and Asuka. "I am aware that Commander Ikari has personal use of me," Shinji at first misunderstood her wording and thought it was some kind of child abuse but he soon shrugged it off, remembering Rei's lack of ability to express herself effectively, "however I am… ambivalent about what should I do."

"Rei… I don't want to force you to do anything, all I'm gonna say is… make your own decision. You're a person who can make up your own mind, okay?" Although Shinji wanted to convince Rei to not follow Ikari's orders, he also knew being too pushy would do more harm than good. Additionally he remembered Rei had self-destructed to defeat the 16th Angel, and the new Rei would probably be devoid of any emotions again. This time he needed to ensure that won't happen.

"That is… agreeable," Rei said, "however I do wish to… inquire more information."

"Go ahead, Rei."

"I wish to know… how much do you know about me?"

Shinji inhaled sharply; he didn't know if it was a good idea to tell Rei everything, yet. He wasn't sure how much she still trusted his father, and he didn't want to take the risk. However, knowing Rei had already knew about their Angelic powers and apparently NERV hadn't restrained him yet, he thought he could at least tell her something. "As far as I know… you, hmmm, you're… cloned from my mother and Lilith," Shinji said, carefully examining Rei's reaction, "so that… you're some kind of sibling to me?"

Rei was actually a bit relieved; she feared Shinji would run away from her as soon as he knew about her true origin. Now seeing Shinji could talk about this rather plainly and apparently he had known this for a while, she brought a small smile to her lips, "That is correct, and thank you, Shinji-kun," Rei paused for a second, "for taking care of me."

"No problem, Rei. Families look after each other, right? Not to mention we are fellow pilots, and every day we risk our lives to protect humanity." Shinji was glad to see Rei open up to him, in this way he could really anticipate Rei to make the right choice when the time comes.

A beam of white light shone into the darkened room, causing for Fuyutsuki's shadow to elongate across the floor. His stomach growled from the lack of food, and his wrists had long since been rubbed raw by the rope that bound them. Barely able to remain awake, he watched as another shadow emerged beside his as echoic footsteps traveled the room. "Sorry it took me so long. I had to take care of something first." Kaji's voice came as both a surprise and a godsend to Kozo.

"They're going to kill you for this, you know?" Though he wasn't going to argue with Kaji freeing him, he felt the least he could do for him was warn him as to what the consequences would be.

"They'll have to get in line." Even in the face of the bleakest of situations, he somehow managed to keep his smile. "Besides that, it'll only be a matter of time until SEELE wants me dead anyway."

Once his hands were untied, Fuyutsuki grasped his wrists and squeezed them to get the feeling back in them. He slowly rose from his chair and turned to face the long-haired man that had just saved him.

"Well, I can't thank you enough." He replied. "I was beginning to think that they were just going to let me die in here."

"They were."

"Figures." He sighed, kicking his right leg out to get the blood flowing through it again. "So what are you going to do now?"

"Well," Kaji shrugged, but his grin remained. "I guess I need to make one more phone call while I can."

"You seem pretty calm for a man who knows he's about to die." Though there wasn't a strong sense of sympathy in his tone, Fuyutsuki did his best not to come off as cold. "If SEELE gets what they want, we're all going to die anyway, right?"

"Yeah." Kozo rubbed his wrists one more time before lowering them to his sides. "Something like that." He grew silent for a moment, looking back at the darkened room where the monolith holograms were hovering during his interrogation. "We should probably get out of here."

"Go ahead." Kaji replied. "I still need to make that phone call." He let out a light chuckle, though this time it did ring slightly of insincerity. The Vice Commander met Kaji's eyes with his own, giving him a slight nod. Though Ryoji had his thanks, Fuyutsuki wasn't going to dwell on what would follow. He knew that Kaji was aware of the consequences that would follow his actions, and to shed light on that would just make things even worse than they already were.

"Thank you, Kaji." The elderly man said before passing by him, hobbling out into the white light that shone in from the doorway, his silhouette becoming strongly outlined as he grew nearer to the exit. The long-haired man smirked as he watched the Vice Commander make his leave before pulling out his cell phone.

Kaji dropped his phone on the ground of the darkened room and then firmly brought his foot down onto it, smashing the device to pieces. Though Misato wasn't there to answer his call, he was able to leave her a message, which in hindsight may have been for the

best. Now that he couldn't be tracked by his phone, he quickly made his way out of the room and towards his office. Once inside, he quickly shut the door behind him and got to work deleting all of his findings and notes on NERV, formatting his hard drive and shredding all papers and documents in his possession. He wasn't going to leave anything behind.

Letting out a sigh, Kaji headed out the door. He figured that if he hurried, he might be able to get out of the GeoFront before SEELE's sleeper agent found him. As he made his way down the empty halls of NERV HQ, he could hear the faint sound of footsteps off in the distance behind him. He was being trailed. If his assassin was behind him, then perhaps that meant he could run. Picking up the pace, he dashed down the halls towards the parking deck. He could hear the footsteps behind him increase in pace along with his. He was now certain that the person following him was the agent. However, as he continued, he could begin to hear the sound of footsteps coming from in front of him just around the corner as well. This was it. There was no running now. With one assassin behind him and another coming from in front of him, he had no way to escape. He looked to his right and saw a giant fan blade slowly spinning, circulating air from the GeoFront into NERV Headquarters. As the blade rotated, he could feel a gust of airbrush across his face while the sets of footsteps grew closer to him. Exhaling, he pulled out a cigarette from his pocket and lit it before turning around to face his killer. He was a rather large man. Security personnel it seemed. He was wearing the standard NERV security attire with a MP5 submachine gun strapped around him and a 9mm pistol in hand. "You're late." Kaji spoke, making one last smirk before the assassin raised his gun and pulled the trigger.

"…"

The sound of exploding bullet primer never came.

Kaji watch in awe as the assassin disappeared into the darkness. "What the-"

"Kaji-san," Kaji jerked his head around just to find Shinji standing in front of him, "I… made a promise. To Asuka."

"Right," Kaji sighed, turning his head toward the direction where the agent once stood, "Wha-what… happened to him?"

"He's somewhere in New London right now…" Shinji said, "Kaji-san… you should hide somewhere as well… until everything's settled. I… I refuse to let you die."

Kaji lowered his eyelids, "Shinji-kun, you really shouldn't be doing this; what if NERV found out about you?"

"Don't worry, sea of Dirac won't trigger alarms…" Shinji spoke, "I… I can send you to… wherever you want, Kaji-san. And… don't even think about refusing!"

Kaji knew Shinji could simply send him anywhere he wanted even if he refuses his offer; so instead of rejecting which might cause Shinji to send him to Europe, he consented, "Fine, Shinji-kun. Get me to Tokyo-2, I have a few contacts there."

Asuka had been awake for days, and she was still restrained in the bed. No one except Dr. Akagi and nurses who came to change infusion bags containing glucose solutions was allowed to enter the room. The loneliness and boredom were driving her insane; it was not a good idea to let the Great Asuka Langley Soryu get bored.

Just as she was about to completely lose control and escape the shithole place using the sea of Dirac, the door hissed open and several guards with submachine guns came in, followed by Ritsuko. "Pilot Soryu, I'm going to unlock the restraints. Don't try anything stupid."

"YES!" Asuka exclaimed, "Just get me outta here! I'm sick of-"

"Who said you're free?" Ritsuko interrupted, "we still have to ask you some questions."

"Wha-you're gonna interrogate me?" Asuka scoffed, "Whatever. It's not like I'm afraid of you Arschlochs!" In fact, Asuka had expected this coming, but making up lies had been difficult. How would she explain her triggering a pattern orange? Maybe she couldn't hider the fact that she could produce AT-Fields anymore. But her ability to use a Dirac Sea could wait.

Ritsuko ignored her insults and began unlocking the restraints while the guards aimed their weapons at her. Asuka made no sigh of resistance since she only wanted to get this thing over with as soon as possible, but she kept her death glare directed at Ritsuko, who felt melted by it. "Get up and stretch a little." She said after unlocking all restraints.

Asuka tried to push herself up; she was surprised that her muscles functioned perfectly despite not being used for days. 'Maybe it has something to do with my S2 organ,' She thought. However, she knew she should act a little; so instead of getting up, she pretended to slip due to lack of strength and fell down while groaning in frustration.

She grinned internally as she saw Ritsuko's amused expression.

After 5 minutes of fake struggling, she finally got up to her feet and followed the group of people to the interrogation room.

The holograms of members of Human Instrumentality Committee sat around the table while Asuka and Ritsuko stood in front of them. This place was duller than before Asuka noticed.

"Report what you know so far, Doctor." The voice came from one of the holograms.

"Yes sir. Two weeks ago, we detected a pattern orange in Germany. NERV Berlin examined the area and found DNA traces that matched Pilot Soryu's perfectly, while the latter was believed K.I.A. during the

attack of eleventh Angel. Not long after the pattern orange disappeared the fourteenth Angel attacked, and Pilot Soryu appeared in the empty entry plug of Unit D just in time to defeat the Angel. Pilot Soryu was immediately taken into custody after the battle."

"Good. You're dismissed Doctor." Another voice said, and continued after Ritsuko left the room, "Pilot, explain your whereabouts from the moment of the eleventh Angel's attack to the attack of the fourteenth."

Asuka took a deep breath, "well, I should start from the eighth Angel actually. While I was sinking down to the volcano, the twelfth Angel saved me and sent me to Germany, using its Dirac sea. That's probably why they could found my DNA traces there. Then during the eleventh's attack, it was actually Unit D which absorbed me into its core and released me during the battle against fourteenth."

"Lying will do you no good, pilot." Another voice said, "we have satellite recordings of the pattern orange occurrence; during that time, there were seven people around the area, and six of them disappeared while the other one died."

Asuka cursed internally about her carelessness and extreme unfortune. How in the world did she just meet those bullies that time that place? Just as she was thinking hard about a plausible explanation, she suddenly remembered something. "Well, I don't know what you're talking about. Are you sure it wasn't some crazy experiments NERV Berlin was doing, like cloning the Angels?"

The leader of Human Instrumentality Committee winced in surprise. 'There's no way she could know about Tabris, right? But it was plausible since Tabris was in NERV Berlin and he was already awake that time.' "Your blind accusations will bring you nowhere, pilot." On the other hand, Asuka knew she got under his skin by capturing the slightest change in his expression. "Ye but remember I came from NERV Berlin. I heard a lot of rumors back then. I mean

Germany is the most technologically advanced country in the world so I guess it make sense that they wanna do crazy experiments."

"Irrelevant." The voice said. Although he didn't really believe her story, he had to contact Keel Lorenz first to make sure it wasn't Tabris. So he decided to change the subject for now. "Pilot, did the Twelfth Angel try to contact you?"

Asuka sighed in relief as she knew she had won round one. "Yeah, well, it said it was lonely and wanted me as its company. So I guess that's why it saved me."

This immediately captured the attention of the Committee. They had always craved every single possible chance of learning Angel-human interaction. And this seemed to be a perfect chance.

For the following one hour, the committee bombarded Asuka with questions regarding her interaction with the Angel. Asuka was more than happy to 'answer' them; she didn't expect her lies could bring such a side-effect. Not that she minded, though.

"… thanks for your cooperation, Miss Soryu. You're dismissed." One of the voices said, sounding content.

Expectedly as soon as Asuka exited the room, she was again escorted back to First Cranial Nerve ward. However, this time they didn't restrain her, probably seeing there's no point in doing so.

SEELE 01: "The interrogation against the Second Child yields curious results. It was certainly a possibility that Tabris triggered the pattern orange; but for now, we have no way to know."

SEELE 04: "He's awake, correct? Why don't you just ask him?"

SEELE 01: "Unfortunately, we had to reupload his soul every two weeks. Currently he holds no memory of that day."

Ikari: "The Second Child currently shows no sign of possessing Angelic powers. This way my plan of eliminating the Second Child holds a high chance of success. However, it is required for the Second Child to be put back into Unit 02."

SEELE 01: "Action approved. Keep disturbances out of the scenario."

"That's strange." Aoba squinted his eyes and leaned in closer to his monitor. At first, he thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, an unfortunate result of double shifting. Upon further inspection though, he found that his eyes were most certainly not deceiving him.

"What is it?" Hyuga asked, looking over from his monitor in the center of the Command Deck. Tiredness had begun to take its toll on him as well, despite the three empty coffee mugs in front of him. "I just got a strange reading coming from Earth's orbit."

"Oh really?" The engineer got up from his station and made his way over to his coworker.

"Hold on, I'll show you." Aoba made a few keystrokes, pulling up his screen from earlier, bringing up what looked like a diagram with a green circle in the middle and numerous little white lights surrounding it. "Just watch." As the white lights blinked, they slowly shifted position, an indication that they were moving along with Earth's orbit. "And right here!" He pointed towards a significantly larger white light that popped up on the screen. As the lights blinked, all the others continued to move. This one however remained completely motionless.

"It has to be a glitch." Makoto shook his head. "There's no way anything can remain motionless in orbit. Even the tenth Angel had to calculate its trajectory when it went into freefall."

"But the MAGI don't…" Suddenly the observation deck was filled with the wailing sound of NERV's alarm while red lights flashed

throughout the room. "Pattern Blue! It's an Angel!"

"Oh my God!" Major Katsuragi gasped at the sight presented on the monitor. The image from their satellite depicted a large winged creature about fifty to sixty meters wide soaring across the upper atmosphere. There was no distinguishable body to speak of, merely two giant connecting wings made of a brilliant light. It almost seemed holy in the way it glowed, very much reminding Misato of the traditional depiction of the biblical angels. "It's been circling Earth's orbit for the past twelve hours or so, judging by its trajectory. Our satellites were only now able to pick it up though." Maya explained. "It's also been flying far out of range for standard weapons, so we have already prepared the positron sniper rifle for Unit 00, and the proton cannon for Unit 02. Unit D will be on standby."

"So they are using Hikari?" Misato asked. The fact was Hikari hadn't been doing much training since the thirteenth Angel, and she was worried about her performance in real combat situations.

"No. The Second Child will pilot Unit 02." A cold voice came from the top, as Misato turned her head in the direction of the voice she found Commander Ikari speaking.

"So Asuka's being released?" She hadn't seen her in two weeks and she was worried sick, Shinji as well. Knowing Asuka was at least okay enough to pilot an Evangelion was certainly a big relief. 'So they still don't know about her yet, excellent.'

"No. Only in combat situations would the Second Child be allowed outside of her room."

"Of course." Misato sighed. She should have known that the oversensitive bastard wouldn't take any risk against his precious scenario.

10 minute later, Shinji came out of the changing room, just to see Asuka waiting for him outside. "Asuka!" Shinji resisted his urge to

hug and kiss her by clenching his fists tightly. "A-are you okay? Why are you here? Did they…"

"I'm perfectly fine, Baka." Asuka smiled at him, "I missed you so much!"

Shinji smiled as well, but it soon faded when he remembered what's gonna happen with the Angel. Asuka saw Shinji's face darkened and immediately knew what he was thinking about. "Don't worry, Baka. It's my nightmare, and I will face it!"

The pilots chatted about other stuff as they walked down the corridor and entered their respective entry plugs swiftly. The core profile of Unit 02 had been changed back to Asuka's. She was more than happy to sit inside Unit 02 again. However, her anxiety and nervousness had been growing rapidly; last time when she faced the fifteenth Angel, it was not a pleasant memory. She could only hope this time Shinji or Rei could rescue her earlier.

"EVAs launch!" Misato ordered. Unit 02 and Unit 0o shot up from the base. Topside, the four-eyed Evangelion sprung out of the elevator, taking position atop a large hill overlooking Tokyo-3. The overcast stretched out as far as she could see, and the rain was pouring. Flipping through her monitors, she switched to lowlight vision. This way she could see through the sick clouds.

The blue Unit 00 crouched behind another hill, gripping on the positron sniper rifle tightly. Rising its positron rifle and took aim on the Angel, Rei focused on the blue crosshair danced around the screen, circling closer and closer to the glowing beast that soared miles and miles above her. "I have locked on the target," the bluenette held her breath as the crosshair made one more loop around the target before locking onto the core of the Angel, turning from blue to red. "Firing." Just as Unit 00 begun to squeeze its finger on the trigger, her screen was filled with a brilliantly blinding light as the Angel started to glow even brighter. From it, a beam of light shot down from the Angel and pierced through the clouds as it shone down onto the blue Evangelion.

"No!" Both Asuka and Shinji cried out as they realized the Angel's target.

Rei screamed in pain, clasping her hands against her head.

"That's not your business, Old hag."

"Old hag?"

"I can find the way by myself, Old hag."

"You shouldn't call someone an old hag, Rei."

"But you are an old hag, aren't you?"

"I'm getting mad, Commander Ikari will spike you…"

"Commander's the one who calls you that."

"Wha-what?"

"He says, the old hag is throwaway. That old hag is useless."

Hands around her throat. Pain. Oxygen deprivation. Death.

"NO! GET OUT!" Rei screamed as her predecessor's memories resurfaced.

"I'm sorry, Rei, I want to unite with Adam…"

"No! You said you won't do what Angel's do!"

"I'm sorry… I'm sorry…"

"NO! GET OUT OF MY HEAD!"

"You are Rei Ayanami."

"I am Rei Ayanami."

"You will follow my orders."

"I will follow your orders."

Doll.

"It hurts! Arghhh!"

"What's happening?" Misato yelled, "What's the Angel trying to do?" Although she had already known the ability of Arael from Shinji, she had to maintain some form of professionalism.

Ritsuko gasped as she watched Rei's synchrograph go ballistic. What started out as a steady reading began to turn erratic. "Brain wave activity is off the chart! If this keeps up, she'll have an aneurism! It's trying to read Rei's mind… It's trying to understand her psychology by digging through her mind."

"Rei! Can you hear me! Pull back!" Misato yelled into the comms.

"I'll take the shot! Hang on, Rei!" Asuka took aim at the Angel and fired her proton cannon. Her aim was perfect, the round hit directly in the center of the Angel's core. However it's AT Field prevented it from penetrating, shattering it into four separate chunks.

"Its AT-Field is too powerful!" Hyuga exclaimed. "We can't hit it from this range!"

On the command center, Ikari's facial expression hardened as the scene unfold. The Angel was supposed to attack Unit 02, but now Rei was the target. Although Rei's body was replaceable, if her soul was destroyed… "Unit 02, assist Unit 00."

Asuka cursed internally as she heard the command. When she was attacked the commander did nothing but let Unit 00 watch at first, and he even kept Unit 01 in stasis. Now it was Rei being targeted, the Commander immediately ordered her to save her. What a humiliation.

Although she hated the order, she couldn't let Rei suffer. "Rei! I'm coming!" Asuka dropped her cannon and sprinted towards Unit 00 and pushed it aside. "Asuka! Retreat!"

But it was too late. The holy light shined on the crimson Evangelion.

"Arghhhhh!" Asuka screamed in pain as a familiar sensation hit her. 'I will not fail this time! I will SHOW YOU! I WILL SHOW YOU!' She summoned all her willpower to generate an inverse AT-Field, directed towards the Angel.

"What is she doing?" Misato asked in horror.

"I… I don't know," Ritsuko said, "The readings don't make sense…"

In orbit, the Angel suddenly felt something. Something it had never felt before.

Pain. Sorrow. Fear. Angst. Loneliness. Rage.

"Oh my God," Ritsuko finally realized the situation, "she's forcing the Angel to relive her memories with her!"

"What? How is that even possible?"

"Asuka's inverse AT-Field is resonating with the Angel's… and at an insane level of strength," Ritsuko explained, "whatever the Angel is doing to her is being mimicked perfectly by Asuka's AT-Field…"

"The Angel's AT-Field strength is rapidly decreasing!" Makoto reported. Just as he said, the Angel's body started to flicker.

"Asuka! Asuka! Father, let me help her! Let me go out there!" Shinji's voice came through the speakers, garnering the attention of everyone on the deck. "I'll take the shot!" Commander Ikari was about to open his mouth, but Major Katsuragi spun around and cut him off before he could get a word in. "Please, Commander Ikari! You have to let Shinji go out there! The Angel's AT-Field is weakened!"

"Denied." Gendo said coldly. "Rei, retrieve the Lance."

"Her sync ratio is only ten percent! She can't move her EVA!" Maya cried.

Commander frowned. He was planning to throw the Lance away so that SEELE can't commence their version of Instrumentality. However, now it seemed like only Unit D could do the job, but he still didn't want his son to know about the secret in Central Dogma. Weighting his choices, he decided the Lance could wait. "Send Unit D out to assist Unit 02 and Unit 00."

"Roger," Misato said, "Shinji, we'll send you to the nearest exit to Asuka's proton cannon, you'll use it to destroy the target, understood?"

"Yes! Just launch me!"

"EVA launch!" Misato didn't waste a second.

Unit D sprinted out the elevator and picked up the proton cannon that Asuka dropped. He took aim at the dimming Angel and fired. The mass of protons flew towards the bird-like creature and shattered its weakened AT-Field like a bullet penetrating cheap glass, piercing its core.

With a final wail, the Angel's great wings began to fade away, and its light dulled into nothing more than a flicker before fading away into nothing.

Shinji's entry plug opened up, spewing hundreds of gallons of LCL onto the floor as he slid down the emergency escape ladder. Once on the ground he sprinted towards Unit 02 and hit the exterior manual eject button on Unit 02's shoulder, causing its entry plug to shoot out of the back of its neck. Quickly making his way over to the plug, he watched as it opened up and the orange liquid flowed out of it. "Asuka?!" He called, running inside of the entry plug, finding the

redheaded girl lying face up in the pilot's seat. "Asuka, it's me." He said as he stepped forward to get closer to her. "Are you alright?"

Asuka slowly opened her eyes and fixed her gaze on the source of the voice. She smiled weakly as she recognized the person, "Baka… I did it, didn't I?"

Shinji entered the entry plug and held Asuka tightly, gently stroking her hair. "Yes… Asuka… I don't know how you did it, but you weakened the Angel so I could kill it… I know you're the best, Asuka."

Asuka smiled contently and closed her eyes as tiredness finally took over. Her sleeping face was peaceful as she had the best dream ever in two weeks.

Inside Unit 00, Rei curled up into a ball on her seat; although the pain had just subsided, she was aware of what happened during the whole battle. 'Sor-Asuka saved me and took the damage for me… Shinji killed the Angel for me…' She thought, 'and I remembered… what happened to the first me… they only think I'm a tool. They think I'm replaceable. I do not wish to be replaceable anymore. I am my own person. I am Rei Ayanami. I… I think I have made my decision.'

AN: And yes this chapter Shinji made big revelations to everyone he trusted. And Rei's character development - how she came to her decision. And Asuka got a sweet revenge against Arael. In the Next chapter Gendo would commence his evil plan how would our favorite Second Child deal with it? See ya next time.

Failure

AN: Shinji here is OOC cuz we all know why - Asuka clearly had a big impact on him.

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 14: Failure

"Misato, it's me. I'm sure you're listening to this message after I've caused you so much trouble. I'm sorry. Please tell Asuka and Shinji that I'm sorry. And there's one more thing. I've been trying to grow some flowers. I'd appreciate it if you could water them for me. Shinji knows where they're at. And please don't dwell on the past. Just move ahead. And if somehow, I can see you again, I will say the words that I couldn't say eight years ago… Goodbye."

It's been the thirteenth time that Misato listened to this voicemail from her lover. Although Shinji had promised Kaji's safety, she couldn't help but feel deeply touched by his words. 'He could've died,' she thought, 'no, scratch that. He would be dead right now if Shinji doesn't have his powers, which he told me that it actually had happened in his timeline.'

Two days before the fight with Arael

Misato laid her head down on her desk and let the tears flow as the sound of the answering machine beeped before rewinding the tape. Somehow she had managed to keep herself composed all the way up until now. She knew his gone. She didn't want to believe it. She didn't want to accept that her lover had been killed, and in a way, she was still hanging onto that hope. A body hadn't been presented to her, and with that came a sense of misplaced optimism. However this message all but sealed the deal. Kaji was dead, and there was nothing she could do to change that. Feeling a presence behind her, Misato lifted her head and looked towards the door where the

silhouette of a lanky teenage boy stood before her. She tried to wipe away the tears from her bloodshot eyes, but it was too late. He had already seen everything that there was to see.

"Misato, are… are you alright?" Shinji asked in a concerning tone.

She managed a faint smile at his concern, but it quickly vanished. "Shinji, if you don't mind, I'd like to just be alone right now." She had to choke through her sobs to get the words out of her mouth. "Why don't you go to the arcade with your friends or something?"

"Misato-san… if it's because of Kaji-san, don't worry about it. I… I made sure he's safe right now." Shinji smiled towards her. One thing about Shinji was that his smile had a strange power to just make people feel better.

Of course, Misato knew what Shinji meant by that; after all, he had Angelic powers, and Shinji was the kind of person who would do anything to protect the people he cared about. In the original timeline, he tended to run away from his problems, but the presence of Asuka had changed everything. Even when he was not in love with her, Asuka could push him out from his shells. Now after all he's been through, added his promise to Asuka, he simply wouldn't let anyone he cared about getting hurt. "I… I believe you, Shinji-kun. T-Thanks."

"No problem, Misato-san. I won't let it happen **again** *."*

Misato couldn't even imagine how her counterpart in Shinji's timeline had coped with the death of Kaji. 'probably cried my eyes out and abandoned everything else except finding out the truth,' she thought bitterly. Sighing, she grabbed another beer from the fridge. She heard that Asuka would be released tomorrow, which was a good sign since apparently they still don't know about her true origin.

Commander Ikari folded his hands over his mouth, exhaling into them. Despite the uneasiness that had begun to form between him

and Kaji, he really did not wish for this to happen. Ryoji had in a way kept the Committee off of his back by feeding them information, and now that he was gone, the old men would undoubtedly be coming at him with full force now. Now the MP EVAs was hearing completion, it seemed SEELE was coming very close to finishing their preparations for Instrumentality. That in turn also meant that they would be demanding he finish his end of it as soon as possible.

"I really hate those old bastards." He sighed. Fuyutsuki raised an eyebrow. Commander Ikari normally did pretty well when keeping a façade in regards to his superiors, but even the sturdiest of walls could crack if enough pressure was laid upon them. In a way the Sub-Commander felt as though this was a bad omen of sorts. For the years they had been working on the Human Instrumentality Project, Gendo always managed to keep himself composed in regards to SEELE. When most men would've cracked, Ikari would do little more than a smirk. Now it seemed that the old men were slowly tearing down the mental fortress Gendo had worked so hard to maintain.

"It doesn't matter," Kozo replied. "Even if they wanted to initiate Instrumentality today, they wouldn't be able to accomplish anything until the last two Angels are destroyed."

"True. However, the old men know that we are nearing the end of this journey, and once they find out that our plans deviate from their own, they will not hesitate to have every single one of us killed." Gendo sighed again; now with the uncertainties caused by Asuka, he didn't even know whether his own plan could work anymore, much less SEELE's.

"Even so, they can't do anything to us as long as the Angels are still a threat."

"That's the only thing stopping them." His eyes rose up to Fuyutsuki. "And while we plan out our next move to combat the Angels, SEELE is already making the preparations to annihilate us if need be."

"We have the EVA Units, though." His advisor spoke, returning the glance. "Unit 00, D, and 02 can take on anything the UN's military can throw at us. Unless of course, they plan on using the MP EVAs for battle."

"And that's exactly what they'll do." The elderly man narrowed his eyes and turned all the way towards Commander Ikari, a quizzical look on his face. "But the MPs are too valuable for them to risk losing. Besides that, it's common knowledge that they are inferior to Unit 00, D, and 02 in every possible way. Even with their flight capabilities, they lack reliable ranged combat weaponry, making it entirely moot."

"Fuyutsuki," He could actually hear Gendo smirk. "I thought you'd be smarter than that. You know that SEELE always likes to keep their secrets. There is far more about the MP EVAs we don't know."

Fuyutsuki lowered his eyebrows, "Regardless, we still need to fight them. What are you gonna do with the Second Child, anyway? Is it wise to eliminate one of our pilots? She could contribute greatly in defending the GeoFront when the time comes."

"The Second Child had already introduced too many disturbances into the scenario. I'd rather have the Second Child eliminated than go on with all of the uncertainties. Moreover, Shinji would break down and become a robot to us if she's dead. However, for now I'd like to release the Second Child from custody; she hadn't proposed any type of threat to us; besides, if she really is an Angel, we couldn't really do anything to stop her. There's no need to keep her in that room if we can't find anything wrong about the Second Child."

The Sub-Commander looked down at his feet. In a way, he was happy to hear that SEELE wouldn't have their way in the end, but at the same time, the fact that Gendo would be getting his was just as disheartening. Adding the fact that Commander Ikari had his plan to eliminate one of their most experienced pilots was not comforting, either. Though the Commander may have claimed that this was all

for Yui, it had become quite clear that he was doing all of this for himself.

Asuka had been reading manga ever since she came back from the fight with Arael. She was in a great mood since she had taken avenge against the three Angels that caused her mental breakdown in her timeline, added that she didn't get retrained since then. She was humming when Ritsuko entered the ward with a fake smile; her mood immediately went down and a scowl appeared on her face, not unnoticed by the blonde. Now wanting to get into any kind of argument, she simply said, "Asuka, pack up your stuff. You can leave whenever you're ready."

Asuka's scowl immediately turned into an overjoyed smile but soon died down and degenerated into a skeptical face, "Why? Why all the sudden?"

"It's a direct order from Commander Ikari; besides, we can't find any anomalies in you."

Asuka's expression softened a bit, "Well, of course you can't find any anomalies since I am perfectly normal!" Not wasting a second, she got up from the bed and grabbed her clothes from the wardrobe. "Is Misato going to pick me up? Or Section 2?"

"Major Katsuragi will come here in thirty minutes," Ritsuko replied.

"Wunderbar. Now get out, I'm gonna change!" Asuka demanded. Although Dr. Akagi was a woman, she knew for a fact that Ritsuko was bisexual. Her relationship with Maya couldn't escape from her eyes.

"What's the problem? I'm a doctor, and I've done several physicals on you. It's not like I haven't seen it before." Ritsuko said with a smirk. Another thing she didn't tell Asuka was that there were cameras mounted inside the First Cranial Nerve ward specifically

designed to monitor energy patterns, however they do not lack video recording capabilities.

Asuka huffed, "Just get out! It's still embarrassing!" The truth was Asuka was well aware of the presence of the cameras; it became her natural instinct after her Angelic powers had awakened. She didn't want to change under surveillance cameras, however she also knew acting strangely would raise suspicions. After all, she was not supposed to know about the hidden cameras.

Ritsuko sighed in defeat; she knew the girl could be very stubborn sometimes. Actually, she was surprised to see Asuka was behaving much less violently than she had anticipated. "Fine. Be quick." She left the room without another word.

Asuka swiftly took off her hospital gown and put on her school uniform; she didn't want to give any cheap peeks to the old perverts working for NERV surveillance department. She then exited the ward and sat down on the chair, waiting for Misato to come and pick her up.

"Asuka!" Misato's cheerful voice came from the end of the hallway, effectively waking Asuka up from her dizziness caused by 30 minutes of waiting. She yawned and looked up, "Eh? Hi! Misato!"

The lavender-haired Major sprinted towards the redhead and gave her a fierce hug, burying her head into her chest. "Emmm… Asuka-chan, I've missed you so much!"

Asuka stayed in that position for a while; normally she would have pulled away already since she disliked Misato's lousy behaviors most of the time. However, after being put in a ward for so long, she craved human contact from someone she trusted. Minutes later she finally pulled away, "Misato, I've missed you too!" She smiled widely. Looking around, Asuka noticed someone was missing. "Where's that idiot?"

"Shin-chan's at home cooking some secret German meal for you. He said it will take some time and he'd rather have it ready when you get home."

Asuka pouted in annoyance. She really wanted to hug and kiss Shinji senseless right now, but apparently, she would have to wait for another hour or so. However, she did appreciate Shinji's actions, which made her more anxious since she really wanted to try the food. "Then let's not waste a minute." Asuka said, her stomach made some growling noises, "Let's get going already!"

"We are home!" Asuka and Misato announced and quickly shoveled their shoes off. "Asuka! Welcome home!" Came Shinji's excited cry; he immediately dropped the pots and pans on the stove and rushed to the hallway. Upon seeing his favorite redhead, wide smiles exploded on both of their faces; they ran toward each other, intending to hug each other fiercely and kiss senseless, while Misato simply stood in the hallway watching the whole ordeal with a warm smile.

And Shinji tripped on the floor.

The tremendous momentum he carried sent him flying forward and his head crashed right into Asuka's chest. They both fell to the floor with Asuka at the bottom, which ended up in a very compromising position. "Urghh…" Asuks groaned in pain and annoyance; shaking her head to clear her vision, she saw their current position and immediately blushed bright red. "Baka!" She smacked Shinji's head lightly, "Get off me before Misa-" Her talking was interrupted by thunder-loud laughter from behind.

"Hahahahahahahaha…" Misato also fell to the floor, rolling and laughing, failing to control her composure. The recent days had been too much pressure for her; she figured she could use the moment to relieve the stress.

"OMMMPPHH-Ah!" Shinji quickly lifted his head up from Asuka's chest, "S-sorry! I-I tripped!" His face blushed as well, but he didn't mind the incident, though. Neither did Asuka, except that she was annoyed by Misato's behavior.

"Hmph, you can appreciate them *later*," Asuka said in a playful grin, causing Shinji to blush deeper. "Now get up. I want to know what my dearest Baka made me for dinner."

"Ah, y-ye-Oh Shit!" Shinji suddenly remembered he didn't turn off the stove, and a smell of something overcooked was spreading in the house. He hurriedly stood up and rushed to the kitchen. Seconds later the sound of dumping overcooked steak and a loud groan could be heard, causing Asuka to sigh. 'What an anticlimactic way of reunion…' She shook her head and looked around, fixing her gaze at the oxygen-depraving Major. "Oi, Misato!" She tried to snap Misato out of her laughter by shaking her shoulder, "Get out of it before I use you as my Karate punch bag!"

Whether it was fear or oxygen deprivation, the Major finally stopped laughing, panting heavily. "Y-you two are so adorable, I just feel so happy for you!" Indeed Misato had always wanted her charges to be happy, and that was the main reason she arranged those two pilots to live together, hoping they could get along. Knowing her plan had worked in three different universes had been such a source of the sense of achievement for her.

"It's not like I need you to remind me that!" Asuka pouted, "Hmph, but thanks, anyway."

Misato finally got up from the floor, wiping out her tears. "Yeah, yeah. Just make sure me as your bridesmaid."

Asuka's face blushed a little once more. Of course, she didn't want anyone except Shinji as her husband, she still thought it as distant. They still had much more pressing matters to deal with, after all. "I'll consider it. Maybe after you and Kaji-right, where is he?" Asuka

looked around worriedly as she remembered what had happened to him in her timeline.

"Don't worry, Shin-chan had taken care of it. That jerk's probably hiding somewhere right now." Misato's expression suddenly clouded a little; clearly, she was still worried about him.

"I know I can always trust the Baka," Asuka smiled, "Hey, Shinji! What's for dinner?" She shouted to the kitchen.

"Ah, some Schweinshaxe, Schweinebraten, and Sauerbraten," Shinji replied, "there was steak as well, but…"

"WHOA, that's so much meat," Asuka said, "It's not like I don't like them, but are you trying to get me fat or something?"

Shinji scratched his head, "Well… I didn't make much since it's my first time, so no worry about calories or fat."

"Hmph, I hope having an… S2 organ doesn't make all things I eat into fat, because I'd stop eating anything if that's the case."

"Well, I don't see you get any fatter…" Shinji chuckled, "your body's still beautiful."

Asuka just blushed a little and said nothing, but she failed to hide her grin.

"Dinner's ready!" Shinji yelled into the living room where his two roommates were watching some soap TV show together. He placed three plates on the table; each of them had an equal share of the food he made. He then prepared the dish for PenPen, who 'wark'ed happily and started digging into it.

The trio ate their food in almost silence with occasional praises from the Major. As for Asuka, the food was simply too good to stop and catch a breath. Devouring all the content in the plate in record time,

the redhead wiped her mouth, a content smile on her face. After all, she had been fed glucose and junk cafeteria food for the past weeks. "That was… more than acceptable," Asuka said, "but… don't you dare stop it."

Shinji just chuckled hearing the words. He knew all too well what she meant by her words; being tsundere, or more *dere,* had always meant Asuka being in a great mood. "Anything for Mein Liebling."

"Hmph, since when you learned to be a sweet-talker?" Asuka asked in a devious grin, "I guess I trained you well."

"Trained? What, you think Shin-chan as your pet or something?" Misato turned her head towards the redhead, a playful smile on her face.

"Hmmm? What, of course not! At least he's MY pet, and I'm not gonna share with you!"

Shinji saw his two roommates were about to start another pointless argument, he decided to change the subject, "Ah, Asuka, since they released you, are you gonna go back to pilot?"

Asuka turned to look at Shinji, tilting her head, "Well, I don't know exactly. But since they already allowed me to fight Arael, I guess it's a yes."

"Right, I forgot to tell you," Misato said, "your next sync test is this Saturday, in Unit 02."

Asuka was more than happy to hear that. She hadn't had a good opportunity to talk to her mother ever since she came here. There were too many things happening, and they prevented her from sitting in Unit 02's entry plug for hours undisturbed. Now the chance came to her, and she intended to make full use of it. "Wunderbar! Momma, wait for me!"

"Insert Entry Plug. Entry Plug inserted. Commence Entry Plug LCL injection. LCL filled. Establishing A10 connections. A-10 connections established and stable. All circuits are operational. Absolute Borderline passed. Stable synchronization established… sync rate holding steady at ninety two percent." Maya reported, a smile appearing on her face. "Evangelion Unit 02 activated."

It was the first sync test after the incident with the eleventh Angel, and Shinji came here as well. Inside the entry plug of Unit 02, Asuka closed her eyes as a familiar warmth wrapped around her body. She cleared her thoughts and tried to reach out to the soul inside the EVA. 'Momma?'

Mein Liebling

Asuka was more than happy to get a reaction out from her EVA, and she kept pressing on.' Momma! It's Asuka!'

Mein Liebling

'Momma! I-I've missed you a lot!'

Mein Liebling

Now Asuka felt genuinely confused. 'M-Momma?'

Mein Liebling

'Her only reaction to my thoughts is 'my love?'' Asuka thought with a slight frown on her face, 'Just like…' suddenly, the realization dawned on her. 'I get it. This is the part of my mother got absorbed into Unit 02. She can't do anything but love me. And the other part of her soul remained in her body after the contact experiment, which made her into…' She shook off her thoughts. It hurt a lot to Asuka that she couldn't hold a proper conversation with her mother anymore, but at least she knew her mother was always with her and loving her.

'I-I'll see you around, Momma.'

Wiedersehen Mein Liebling

Asuka smiled a little and cleared her thoughts, concentrating on synchronization.

"Senpai, you may want to have a look," Maya said, her eyes fixing on the screen reporting status of Unit 02.

Ritsuko came behind Maya, her right arm resting on the back of the chair, "What is it?" She asked, pushing her glasses back into place, "Oh my God… Asuka's sync ratio is holding steady at one hundred and thirty-five percent? How is this even possible without dual-syncing?" Although she knew it was possible for sync ratios to go above one hundred percent, she never thought anything like this would happen in sync tests. She opened a communication channel to Unit 02 and said, "Asuka, how are you feeling?"

"Feeling Great!" Came in Asuka's cheerful voice, "How am I doing?"

"Your sync ratio is currently holding at one hundred and thirty-five percent, breaking all of our former records," Ritsuko said. She didn't really like the loud and noisy redhead, added their earlier unpleasant encounters, she couldn't help but feel half-proud, half-surprised at Asuka's performance. After all, this would certainly help improve her mood, which would do good for everyone.

"You are doing great, Asuka!" Shinji said happily into the comms. He was a little bit surprised at her sync ratio as well.

"What do you expect from your best pilot? After all I saved your asses several times already!" Asuka exclaimed proudly, making Shinji giggle.

Ritsuko simply snorted at the casual show-off, "Asuka, while higher sync ratios mean better performance, it will also bring more pain, possibly real physical harm if you stay above one hundred percent."

"I know, I know. I'm sure it'll be easy to keep it at ninety-nine point nine percent, right?" Asuka said sarcastically, "I thought this is more of your job!"

Ritsuko sighed. 'I knew it's not a good idea to even talk to her.' "Maya, lower the plug depth and see what happens."

"Hai." Maya said, "Lowering plug depth by ten." She typed a few keystrokes into the terminal and waited for the reaction.

Inside the entry plug, Asuka suddenly felt things changed around her; her connection to EVA became much more intricate and clearer.

Mein Liebling Mein Liebling

Mein Liebling Mein Liebling

'M-Momma? Why are there two voices?'

Mein Liebling Mein Liebling

Mein Liebling Die… with me

Asuka felt a chill run down her spine as she heard the words, cold sweat and goosebumps appeared on her skin. 'What the hell? Who are you?'

Mein Liebling

Die with me…

'No! You are not Momma!' Asuka yelled mentally, 'Give me my Momma!'

Mein Liebling

DIE WITH ME, Asuka!

"Senpai! Asuka's sync ratio has jumped to three hundred and seventy percent!" Maya cried, "her synchrograph is all over the place!"

"What's happening?" Shinji asked worriedly, "Asuka, are you okay?" He knew perfectly what it meant to have such a high sync ratio.

Ritsuko shivered at the words; looking at the readings she found something disturbing, "Pilot's ego barrier is breaching! Stop the test! If the sync ratio goes to four hundred, she'll lose her physical form!"

"Hai, Senpai!" Maya pressed on the emergency stop button. "Signal received! Plug ejected!"

Asuka suddenly felt all the voices and connections severed, and her surroundings went cold. Sighing, she knew something had gone terribly wrong.

'Momma…'

Ten minutes later she met Shinji in the hallway leading to the changing room. Making a weak smile, she spoke first, "Shinji, I met my Momma. But it didn't go well."

"What happened? Your sync ratio had gone close to four hundred! A little higher we would lose you!" Shinji's expression nothing but concern.

Asuka sighed, "Shinji, remember I told you… about how my mother? How she became after the contact experiment?" Seeing Shinji nodding slowly, she continued, "I think… her soul split in two… after the plug depth was lowered, I began hearing two voices… one was my Momma, loving me. And the other… wanted me to die with her."

Shinji gulped hard hearing the words, "A-Asuka… I… will it be safe for you to go in there again? What if…"

Asuka waved her hand to cut Shinji off, "Don't worry, as long as the plug depth remains normal, there won't be a problem." She sighed in annoyance; she had thought today would be her tearful reunion with her mother, however things went terribly wrong. Asuka wanted to lighten the mood, so she decided to change the subject. "Anyways, I heard Misato is going to put me back to school. Is there any point in doing so? I've already missed so many, not to mention I have my college degree."

Shinji chuckled, "Asuka, it's just for socializing purposes."

"Hmph, I don't see there's any need doing so since I have you now."

"Well, you got to spend more time with me, wouldn't it be great? Horaki-san and Toji had gone back to school earlier, and she missed you, too."

Asuka thought about the proposal for a while. The truth was she couldn't really see any drawbacks to the plan, and it was true that she needed fresh air. "Fine. I'll go, but only under one condition - you'd better not slack off on making Bentos! And I want more German food!"

The weekend came and went, and it was time for Asuka to rejoin the place she despised for so many reasons. The trip to school was uneventful, aside from few confused or surprised glances from their schoolmates. Asuka was at first a little confused about her schoolmates' reactions; then she remembered she had said she was a clone. No wonder no one wanted to come near to her anymore. Not that she minded, tho.

Stepping into the classroom, Asuka quickly drew a lot of attention from her classmates. She filtered out the gossips of them and walked towards her seat like nothing happened. She also noticed that Rei was absent.

"Asuka!" She turned around to see a double-pig-tailed brunette smiling widely running towards her.

'Of course, the first one to greet me is Hikari,' She thought. "Hello, Hikari!" She opened her arms to welcome her friend and brought her into a tight embrace.

"I'm glad you are okay!" Hikari said, "It's been so long since the last time I saw you! I was worried sick! It was Ikari-Kun who told me you're okay that settled me down a little!"

"No need to worry, Hikari! I'm the great Asuka Langley Soryu, I can handle everything!" Asuka said proudly, "How have you been? How far have you and the Jock Stooge progressed? Have you gone to first base already?" She teased with a wink.

Hikari blushed a little, "Asuka! We are taking things slowly!" She paused a little, looking around, making sure no one was eavesdropping, "we… we only kissed!"

Just as Asuka and Hikari were doing their casual girls' gossips, Shinji, Kensuke, and Toji were at the other part of the classroom chatting. "Yo, Shin-man! How's your weekend?"

"It's fine, I guess, I got to spend more time with Asuka." Shinji said with a small grin.

"Good for you, man. By the way, what's up with Red recently? She's been missing school for a while." Kensuke asked.

"Ah, there was an incident at NERV, and she's not allowed to leave GeoFront," Shinji said. Although he was technically telling the truth, he still hid the majority of the information from them. "And what about your pilot status? Are you and Hikari…"

Toji's eyebrow twitched a little, "We are both reserved pilots now, we don't have EVA Units for us, do we?" In fact, Toji was more than happy to be reserved; actually, he'd rather have nothing to do with

EVAs anymore. However, his little sister was still in NERV hospital, recovering. NERV's cutting-edge medical technology had been showing its true colors regarding healing Sakura's wounds, and this single reason was enough for Toji to stay as a reserved pilot.

Shinji sighed, "So I'll take Sakura's still in the hospital?"

"Yeah, man. I plan to quit NERV as soon as she recovers. With Hikari." Toji said with a sad look on his face.

"Man, you know, I was obsessed with EVAs before. Now I really don't want to be a pilot anymore, although I'm still interested in technical parts of them." Kensuke said, much to Shinji's surprise.

"Right. I don't want any of you to have anything to do with the EVAs," Shinji said, "every time I'm in an EVA people get hurt. If it's not because I could protect people I care about, I'd already run away."

The three stooges fell into a comfortable silence. Sensei came in minutes later and the students promptly went back to their seats. "Rise! Bow! Sit!" Hikari called.

The Sensei kept on talking about Second Impact, which quickly got everyone bored. After hours of torture, the lunch bell finally rang, and everyone in the classroom let out a big cry of joy.

"Baka-Shinji! Let's go eat!" Asuka said, smiling, slamming her hands onto Shinji's desk.

"S-sure thing, Asuka." Shinji took out the Bentos and stood up, his wrist was immediately grabbed by Asuka who started dragging him out of the classroom. He made no resistance whatsoever.

They reached the roof of the building and sat down at their 'usual' spot. "I hope you cooked something good - I mean, I know whatever you cook is good, but I want good German food! Like you promised!"

Shinji smiled, "How could I forget? Open the bento and see what's inside!"

Asuka opened the bento, just to find a steak with some bread aside. Looking carefully, she found there was something on the steak; words written by sauce, 'ich Liebe Dich. Asuka immediately blushed and smiled hard, "Hmph. It's not exactly German, but I guess it'll do." 'When does he get so good at dealing with girls?' She thought.

Fortunately for Shinji, he could read all what Asuka thought by her expression. "I'm glad you like it, Asuka." He said with a warm smile.

The pilots ate their lunches in a comfortable silence. Asuka finished first since she was practically devouring the meal like a wolf. Unfortunately, her actions had a little side-effect - now she had to go to the bathroom. "Shinji, I think I ate too fast and now my stomach aches! Scheisse! I need to go to the bathroom!" She swiftly got up from the ground and started running towards the exit. "And by the way, the food was really good!" She yelled to Shinji just before she disappeared into the building.

Shinji could only sigh in response.

Twenty minutes later Asuka finally came out of the bathroom. As she was walking towards her classroom, she was suddenly surrounded by a group of upperclass students. 'Great, first day at school, see what I get into.'

"Look this is the freak clone," one of the students said, "Hey we don't welcome clones here! Get back to your lab tubes!"

"You leave now, or we'll force you to leave!" Another student threatened, swinging his fist.

Asuka sighed, "listen you dorks, I have no time dealing with stuck-up kids! Fuck off my face right now, or I'll make you hope you were the Angel I dissected last month!"

The group of seniors exchanged puzzling looks, then suddenly burst out laughing. "Hahaha, very funny, you freak. What are you without your robot?"

Asuka groaned in irritation. She assessed the situation and decided the best course of action now would be to beat the dog before the lion; one-shotting the bulkiest one among them would certainly deliver the message. Just as she was about to lash out, she suddenly felt a familiar vibration inside her pocket. 'Damn, don't tell me it's an Angel attack.' She took out her phone and confirmed her suspicion. Without a word, she started running towards the stairs. Two of the upperclassmen tried to block her way but were sent flying. "Fuck off my way!" She yelled without looking back.

Misato looked up at the monitor of the Command Center, staring at the strange creature hovering over the open fields of Tokyo-3. To call it a creature felt wrong, as unlike any of the previous Angels, it showed no forms of anatomy similar to that of the creatures of Earth. It had no arms, legs, eyes, or even a face to speak of. The Angel could only be described as a glowing halo formed by a double helix.

"I've never seen anything like it before." Major Katsuragi let out, staring in awe at the being.

"Neither have the MAGI, apparently." Ritsuko replied, looking over Maya's shoulder and glancing over the readings on her monitor. "It keeps cycling between orange and blue, which means that the MAGI can't properly identify it due to constant shifts in its molecular structure."

"So basically it doesn't have one specific form?" Misato asked, seeking clarification as she approached the microphone.

"In laymen terms, yes." Ritsuko said.

"Alright." Misato sighed before speaking into the microphone. "Are the pilots of Unit D and Unit 02 prepped and ready?"

"The pilots had just finished changing and heading toward the EVA cages." Aoba reported.

"How about Unit 00? What's Rei gonna do?" Maya asked.

"She'll be put on standby for now, we don't know how much lasting damage from the last Angel had on her. Just put Unit 00 on the catapult."

"Hai." Maya said.

Shinji and Asuka got into their respective EVAs and prepared for launch. They were very nervous since this Angel was the hardest one to deal with; in both of their timelines, it took Ayanami to self-destruct to kill the Angel. Now Ayanami was put on standby, leaving Shinji and Asuka to face the Angel themselves. Did this mean one of the needed to self-destruct as well?

Asuka shook the thoughts out of her head. Now it's not the time to think about something like that. "Misato, I'm ready!"

"I'm ready as well!" Shinji's voice came into the channel.

"Right. EVAs launch!" Misato ordered. After Unit D and Unit 02 went up to the surface, she then said, "Unit D will use the sniper rifle, and Unit 02 will engage in close-quarters combat with prog axe. Understood?"

"Roger." Both pilots said.

On the battlefield, Unit D already remained in position, totting its sniper rifle in hand. Crouching down behind a series of trees, Shinji looked on at the Angel as it spiraled around in its fixed position. If he had to make a rough estimate, it was about three hundred meters in circumference, but only five or so meters thick. He scanned up and down it for its core, but was unable to find it, just like the last time. If it even had a distinguishable core for that matter.

"Shinji," Misato's voice came through, filling the cockpit. "just hold back and let us study it for a bit. We don't have a good idea on how to approach it yet." Almost as soon as the words came through, the spiraling double helix slowly ceased its spiraling, coming to a complete stop. "No." The brown-haired pilot spoke, his colbalt eyes narrowing on the Angel. "It's coming!"

Within a matter of seconds, the double helix that made up the Angel started to morph together, bonding it into one single form. Then with a shriek, the halo split in two, morphing it into a long, thread-like shape. With blinding speed, one of its ends shot forward as its tip formed into a fine point, lunging at Unit D like a spear. "Shinji, get out of the way!" Misato's cry was in vain, as even the impressive speed of an Evangelion couldn't outmatch the Angel's. Shinji raised his AT-Field, but the powerful force field did nothing to hold back the Angel, as the thread pierced into the narrow abdomen of the blue Unit D, only being stopped from penetrating further by the EVA's free hand, which is used to hold back the Angel. Shinji could feel a searing pain in his lower stomach as warped tendrils began to crawl through both the EVA and his plugsuit. "Arghhhh! It hurts!" He cried out in pain.

Over the communication channel, he could hear the Command Center speak of contamination spreading throughout the EVA, as well as bio-fusion with the Angel. In a desperation attack, Unit D rose its sniper rifle with its freehand and unloaded its clip into the strand of thread it was grasping onto. Each bullet ripped through the Angel, but the wounds were instantly sealed by the strange biomaterial that made up the creature's anatomy.

"Asuka, assist Unit D!" Misato yelled into the comm channel. On the screen, the percentage of bio-fusion was increasing rapidly.

Above the command deck, Gendo Ikari folded his hands tighter. He was still waiting for the moment.

"Shinji, I'm coming!" Asuka rushed towards Unit D and grabbed the tail of the Angel, she willed her EVA to pull the Angel out of her boyfriend. With a combined effort from Unit D the Angel gave in and

its connection with the purple-reddish EVA was severed. Turning around, it targeted Unit 02 as its next prey. With a whirl of motion, the Angel circled around the crimson EVA and entangled itself onto the humanoid. 'Great, now I'm in trouble.' Asuka thought, 'but at least Shinji is safe.'

Gendo Ikari smiled. He was waiting for the moment. Reaching down to his pocket, he pulled out a small device and pressed the button.

Inside the entry plug Asuka suddenly felt something.

DIE WITH ME!

"Huh?" Asuka was confused. Looking at the EVA Unit status panel her went wide as she saw what was happening.

'MODE D - ACTIVATED'

"Unit 02's control interface was overwritten!" Maya reported in horror, "OH MY GOD ITS GONNA-"

Before she even finished her sentence, the screen monitoring the battlefield was filled with bright light. Everyone on the command deck, also including Shinji in Unit D, watched in awe as Unit 02 exploded into a ball of fire.

"… self destruct…" Mya finished her sentence, her voice trembling.

"Pattern Blue eliminated… target has gone silent," Aoba finally reported, "and Unit 02…"

Ritsuko looked around her, everyone was in disbelief or confusion. However, Misato seemed to be oddly calm. "Send a retrieval team out there." She ordered.

Gendo sat in his office alone in satisfaction. His plan worked out perfectly, didn't it? Two birds with one stone. He couldn't help but

smile widely.

However, as a person who had so many years of experience in the Anti-reconnaissance, he felt something was still off. To be specific, he felt the atmosphere of his office was filled with a murderous aura. He had never felt something like this before.

He then heard footsteps walking towards him. Very light, but definitely there. A chill ran down his spine. It couldn't be an assassin, right? His office was literally the safest place on earth, excluding Terminal Dogma. Was it Fuyutsuki? He was still on the command deck below his office. Could it be Section 2 coming in to report? But they would certainly announce their entrance. He turned around slowly; once he saw the intruder, he immediately felt the whole world spinning around him and broke apart. He summoned all his willpower to spit out his final words before falling into the darkness.

"Pilot Soryu."

Outside on the battlefield, Ritsuko and several technicians were wearing heavy hazmat suits. They found the remains of Unit 02's entry plug, which was no more than a crushed, mangled mess. The laser cutting crew cut open the plug, Ritsuko stepped in, and she was taken aback by what she saw.

She saw nothing.

"The Second Child's condition will be classified Top Secret," Ritsuko ordered, "Sergeant, salvage the entry plug and clean the site."

Inside Unit D Shinji could feel a sudden burst of Asuka's AT-Field. Of course, he knew she would be okay; he was more worried about whether she could continue to hide her true identity after this incident. He waited in the entry plug for the retrieval team to pick him up.

On the command deck, everyone except Misato was still shocked. "Pilot Ikari retrieved successfully, condition normal," Makoto finally reported, "we are not getting anything from recovery team for Unit 02."

Misato sighed. She knew Asuka would be okay, or the retrieval team would have reported something already. The only explanation for them not reporting anything would be they saw something abnormal, and the information was classified. "How did it self-destruct on itself?"

"I… I don't know," Maya said, "something sent a signal to Unit 02 and overridden the controls. Then it was set to MODE D by the signal. Things happened so fast that there was no time to even eject the entry plug."

Misato swallowed. She knew this could be some trick played by someone who wanted Asuka dead. Presumably Ritsuko. Or the Commander. She shook her head and changed the subject, "Status of Unit 00?"

"Moving back to EVA cages," Aoba said, "Pilot Ayanami in excellent condition."

"Get pilots to the debriefing room," Misato ordered.

"Hai." Maya said, "Should I inform Commander Ikari?"

"Get Section 2 to report to him."

"Hai." Maya picked up the phone, "Agent Hanzo, report to Commander Ikari."

"Roger." The agent said to the microphone in his earbuds. Several seconds later, the agent's panicked voice came into the phone, "Report! We have an emergency! Commander Ikari is missing!"

"What?" Maya asked, "What do you mean by 'missing?'"

"The commander is not in the office!"

"Check the surveillance cameras! We need to know where he went!" Misato ordered, "Use the MAGI to track him down!"

"The camera inside the office had been fried moments ago! However, in the last image, the Commander was still there!" Makoto said.

'Not good…' Misato thought, her fists clenching, "announce first level alert! Mobilize all police forces and Section 2! We need to find him!" Misato wasn't really cared about the Commander's personal welfare; in fact, she would be glad to see him die. However, she was more afraid that the Commander had some secret plans.

SEELE 01: "Ikari's missing, presumably abducted. The deviation in our scenario is becoming irreversible. We need to take action."

SEELE 03: "Do you plan to send Tabris there right now?"

SEELE 01: "That is correct. Tabris is already in Tokyo-3. We need to speed up the process. The final judgment day will come soon."

SEELE 05: "Without Unit 02 our plan could certainly to carried out more smoothly. Tabris will be likely to hijack Unit 00. With two EVAs down, nothing could stop the ultimate evolution of humanity."

Shinji came back to the apartment with Misato, looking dejected. He didn't know how long he had to wait to be with Asuka again. So he was greatly surprised to see his favorite redhead already waiting for them in the living room.

"Asuka!" Shinji said happily.

"Hey Baka," Asuka greeted, "I guess I can stay here, right? As long as I don't go outside."

"R-right," Shinji replied, "but when do we plan to tell NERV?"

"Shinji, your father is missing right now. So that means Fuyutsuki is in charge of everything. Maybe we can manage to reveal part of Asuka's identity, just enough for her to go outside without triggering alarms." Misato said, a grin appearing on her face, "And I guess you're the one who took care of the Commander, right Asuka?"

"Hmph. He tried to kill me, what should I do? Beg for mercy? Of course I'd fight back!" Asuka snorted, "Don't worry I didn't kill him. I simply put him somewhere safe but impossible to get out. It's just well-justified self-defense. Maybe after this whole mess I could get him back, if Shinji would want that of course."

Misato almost smiled, "but how do you know it was him?"

Asuka scoffed, "It was my sixth sense. I just had a feeling that the Commander would do something like this. I just went to his office and saw the detonator on his table. What an Arschloch." She then looked at Shinji, "your father's really a fucking piece of shit!"

Shinji sighed, "Asuka, I don't see him as father anymore. Not after what he tried to do to you. And I have my family right here and now; what more can I ask for?"

Both Asuka and Misato smiled at his words. "Anyways, now you should make me dinner!"

"Sure thing, Asuka."

The day passed, and Shinji had to go to school again. He was becoming more and more nervous since he knew who the last Angel was. In his timeline, he was obsessed with Asuka, and he simply had a friendship with Kaworu, but it didn't make it easier when he had to kill him. So this time he decided to confront the Nephilim; he wanted to know what's his intention in befriending him, just to ask him to kill him. Shinji felt betrayed.

The next day at school, Shinji just felt incredibly anxious; when Toji and Kensuke asked him about the Angel attack yesterday, and Hikari asked him about Asuka, he simply brushed them off with "She's okay but had to stay in GeoFront." He didn't want to be impolite; he just couldn't get off the feeling of something's gonna happen.

The bell rang and Sensei came in. "Eh, before we begin class today, um," Nebukawa sensei began, "We have a new transfer student joining us today… please introduce yourself to class."

Shinji blinked. He had kinda expected something like this would happen, but he wasn't prepared for it to happen so early. Light footsteps took the newcomer to the chalkboard; his nimble hands quickly drew a few elegant kanji on the board. He turned to face the class with a gentle smile.

Silver hair. Red eyes. Pale skin. It is him.

"Hello, everyone. My name is Kaworu Nagisa. I am happy to be here today," His red eyes scanned the classroom, finally settling down on Shinji. Shinji saw clearly Kaworu's eyes twitched, his ever-presenting grin almost changed into confusion for a moment. But he quickly adjusted his composure and continued, "Very happy."

AN: Sorry for letting you guys wait so long. Now we are moving into the final part of the story.

The Final Messenger

AN: Some big revelations are happening in this chapter, so it's a bit longer. Please read through Shinji and Kaworu's conversations carefully. Leave a review to say what you think about the concept of this world!

Disclaimer: I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 15: The Final Messenger

One feeling that Kaworu had rarely had was confusion. Now he was experiencing it. He simply couldn't understand what was happening; how come Shinji Ikari possessed such a strong AT-Field? It had never happened before in any other lives his counterparts lived. He didn't have his counterparts' memories, but he could feel a general trend from all of them. Sometimes Shinji was desperate for love and friendship, other times he had the Second Child with him, and sometimes he had Rei with him. In some of his lives, Kaworu even tried to give love to the desperate Second Child, well those attempts failed miserably. It seemed his way of approaching people couldn't work with the fiery redhead. But this thing was new, or at least it had happened so few times that he couldn't pick it up among all the fuzzy memories.

Suddenly Kaworu didn't know how to approach Shinji anymore. At least he was sure that Shinji wasn't an Angel; that was even if he comes to contact with Adam, Third Impact wouldn't happen. Every time he would assess the situation and decide whether he should give him love or just friendship, depending on Shinji's relationship with Rei and Asuka. In this timeline from what he knew from SEELE's reports Shinji and Asuka was in love - although he didn't see her in class, which made him curious -, so his original plan was to simply befriend him. Now though he wasn't even sure whether he should even come close to him.

Walking closer toward an empty seat two rows beside Shinji's seat, Kaworu smiled and nodded to the class. Most of the girls were immediately attracted by his exotic features, and the males were getting jealous. Sitting down on his seat, he opened his laptop and immediately got a flood of new messages.

Kaworu shook his head and discarded the messages. However, he noticed something when doing so; Shinji had sent him a message. Curious, he clicked on the message.

Nagisa-san, could you meet me on the roof during lunch? I'd like to show you around.

Shinji I.

Kaworu smiled a little; at least Shinji seemed friendly enough to him. Maybe things weren't so bad after all. He typed his reply to Shinji.

I'm glad to. And call me Kaworu, Shinji-kun.

Although he saw Shinji flashed him a warm smile, Kaworu could still sense Shinji's nervousness by the slight vibration of his AT-Field. Shaking his thoughts off, Kaworu started paying attention to the teacher. He was still interested in Lilin culture, especially how they would cope with such a catastrophic event.

Time came and passed, and the lunch bell rang. Shinji had been keeping stealing glances in his direction; Kaworu wasn't sure if it was a good sign or not. He had already lost his confidence in reading Shinji's thoughts.

Kaworu came to the roof and waited for Shinji's appearance. Moments later, the brown-haired pilot emerged from the exit, humming Ode to Joy.

"Ode to Joy," Kaworu said, turning his head to Shinji, "That is the song you are singing, is it not?"

"Oh! Hi, Kaworu-kun!" Shinji quickly glanced to the last Angel, "Yeah. Am I singing too loud? I'm sorry if I bothered you."

The silver-haired boy rolled his eyes, waving his hand in a dismissive gesture. "Don't apologize. I thought it was beautiful." He lowered his hand and placed it in his pocket, keeping his eyes on Shinji. "They say that music is the pinnacle of Lil-mankind's greatest achievements. Wouldn't you agree?"

Shinji cocked his head slightly at the question and the slip tongue of the word 'Lilin'. Though he did fancy a wide variety of music from classical to bubble-gummy pop, he had never really thought about it being something so divine in the way that this strange boy was describing it. Of course he had already heard the same exact line in his timeline. "Right, I think music is beautiful, too. It used to give me a gate to escape reality, but now I simply enjoy them."

Kaworu smiled knowingly, "I take you have found your happiness, Shinji-kun."

Shinji blushed a little, "Y-yeah, I found my happiness in the people around me, especially Asuka."

"Asuka? Is she the Second Child, pilot of Evangelion Unit 02?"

"Yes, and she's my, errr, gir-girlfriend," for some reason Shinji was still a little bit shy saying such things.

"I am glad you have found your love, Shinji-kun. Everyone deserves to be loved." Kaworu said, his ever-presenting grin grew wider. Well his purpose, aside from uniting with Adam, was to give Shinji happiness. For what reasons unknown, maybe it was because he found his heart pure, or maybe it was the kindness of a God towards a human. If Shinji had already found what he needed, there's only one purpose left.

Kaworu turned around and ready to leave. Although he had made up his mind, it could wait. He was still curious about the First and

Second Child. "It's my time to leave, Shinji-kun. Nice to meet you."

Shinji didn't want him to go yet. His intention of meeting Kaworu on the roof wasn't simply to have a friendly talk. He had so many questions he wanted to ask. He wanted to know why Kaworu chose to befriend him and just to betray him. He wanted to know why he had to submit to the Call from Adam. He wanted to confront him.

Most importantly, he wanted to know more about the Angels, their powers and limits, since he was close enough to them. Shinji even had a feeling that Kaworu had already known his Angelic powers since he could also sense his AT-Field. He thought it was logical that the sensation was reciprocated. "W-wait, Kaworu! I-emm, we can have lunch together if you'd want."

Kaworu was surprised at his insistence, not that he minded. "Why not, Shinji-kun." They sat down side by side in front of the railing while Shinji took out two Bentos and handed one to Kaworu, who gladly accepted.

"So… Kaworu, you're the Fif-Sixth Child, right?" Shinji asked, almost slip tongued, but unnoticed by the otherwise perceptive Angel.

"They told you, have they not?" Kaworu said, taking a mouthful of food. He paused for a few seconds to swallow the content and continued, "I am indeed the Sixth Child."

"Well, that's great!" Shinji tried to smile, but he was so nervous that his attempt ended up being an awkward grin, "but… we don't have a spare Unit for you."

"I am on the reserved pilots list, not unlike the Fourth and Fifth Children." Kaworu said, "however, I do believe NERV Berlin has completed some of the Mass Production Evangelions, which I shall pilot if it comes to that."

Shinji blinked; he took a sharp breath and suddenly felt nauseous hearing the name; his memory of Asuka's Unit 02 being torn to

pieces by the white vulture-like EVAs resurfacing. Not as bad as PTSD since he had Asuka now, but it still stung a lot. "M-MP EVAs? They are completed?" Of course he knew they were completed, but his brain that time couldn't really come up with any other response.

Kaworu noticed that sudden change in Shinji's composure and violent shift of his AT-Field. He wasn't sure why Shinji had acted this way when hearing about the MP EVAs; he wasn't even supposed to know them yet. But what he knew was that Shinji wasn't feeling well with the topic, so instead of pressing on the problem he decided to change the subject. "Correct. But let's not talk about it right now." Kaworu trailed off, waiting for Shinji to calm down a little, "I wonder what is your plan after the Angel wars?"

Shinji took a deep breath, effectively coming out of his bad memories. Shaking his head, he said, "I don't know. Maybe I'll just live my life somewhere with Asuka."

"I see. That is such a cliché answer." Kaworu giggled, "Really? That's all you want? Just to be with the one you love? No big or aspiring desires? No fantasies you'd like to see fulfilled? None of that?" While Kaworu continued laughing, The Third Child frowned, looking back down at his lap. "No, not really."

Once the words escaped his mouth, Kaworu ceased his chuckling and stared at Shinji with fixated crimson eyes. "I mean, before I came here, before I became an EVA pilot, I really didn't have anything. I didn't have any real friends or anybody that I really cared about. But now that I do have those things, I'm starting to realize that was the only thing that I was really missing. I don't really care what I end up doing after all this is done. I'll just be happy to be with my loved ones." His frown started to morph into a smile as he rose his head back up. "What are your dreams, Kawor-" Shinji stopped himself after laying his eyes upon the silver-haired teen. Kaworu's crimson eyes shimmered under the lights hanging above them. His mouth was just slightly agape. "Kaworu, are you okay?"

"You truly feel that way, don't you?" His voice was hushed and serious, a strong contrast to how it was before.

"Well, yeah." He nodded. "That's beautiful, Shinji." Taking in a deep breath, Kaworu turned away from Shinji and gazed blankly ahead. Never before had he heard of such tenderness. In his experience, humans did nothing but manipulate others to achieve what they wanted, which in turn was why he manipulated them. However, Shinji was different than the humans he knew. He wasn't out for his own personal advancement. He was there for those he cared about and nothing more. Truly, Shinji was a selfless individual. And the pure heart of Shinji Ikari had been the reason for his love to him, right?

"Excuse me." He spoke, rising up to his feet. "I have to go. I'll see you tomorrow, Shinji."

"Wait, Kaworu, I still…" Before he could get his sentence out, Kaworu was already making his way down the catwalk and showed no signs of turning back to answer his call. Realizing that calling out to him would be in vain, Shinji gave up on it and let out a sigh before rising to his feet as well. It was getting late, and he wouldn't want to get late for class.

Ritsuko took in a puff of her cigarette before moving it from her lips, blowing a cloud of smoke into the shadowy room while cradling a manila folder under her free arm. Aside from the lights inside of the empty cylindrical tube in the center of the room, the only illumination to be found was the glowing orange light from the tip of her cigarette. The fake blonde leaned against the giant tube, her feet tapping rhythmically.

With the Commander missing, the blonde saw no drawbacks against her actions. Hearing the echoing sound of boots on metal, Ritsuko turned her head towards the incoming person. "About time you got here." She said, dropping her cigarette to the ground and stomping it

out with her right high heel, twisting it into the ground to extinguish it. "Without Gendo interfering me, I could finally get this done."

Misato stopped mid-stride upon hearing her refer to Commander Ikari by his first name, but shook it off and continued making her way towards the scientist. From what Shinji told her apparently Ritsuko had been maintaining a physical relationship with the Commander. She had always wondered how in the world did Gendo attracted three separate brilliant female scientists. "Sorry." She replied. "I got a little bit lost. I've never been down here before." Katsuragi rubbed her hands on her arms. Even with her jacket on, she could still feel chills running up her arms. "So what did you call me down here for? It must be something important if you brought me all the way down here to the guts of Terminal Dogma while the Commander can't know about it."

Dr. Akagi let a faint chuckle escape her, though it came off more like a scoff. "Oh, he already knows. He just doesn't know that I'm telling you about it."

"About what?" The lavender-haired woman cut straight to the chase. She had long since grown tired of Ritsuko's insistence on beating around the bush before finally getting to her point.

"It's about the new pilot." She answered, pulling herself up from against the tube, "I have the documents right here with the pilot file." She explained, holding up the manila folder in front of her.

"Let me see that." Misato snagged the folder out of Ritsuko's hand, to which the scientist had no protest.

"Look through the pilot's file." Dr. Akagi's brown eyes started to narrow into little slits as she beamed at Misato as if some sort of forewarning of what she would find amongst those documents. Slowly lowering her eyes back down to the folder, Misato scanned through the first page of the pilot's file. His name was Kaworu Nagisa, and below his printed name was his mugshot. His skin was rather pale, and his features were slender to the point where they

were almost feminine. His shaggy hair was almost silver in color, and his eyes were a strong, piercing crimson. She immediately recognized him as the seventeenth Angel; his appearance and name matched perfectly with Shinji's description.

"He looks like Rei." She let out, looking back up at Akagi. Misato wasn't about to just let the information out.

"The resemblance is almost uncanny, isn't it?" She smirked. "Albino, angelic features. It's almost as if they were related."

"What are you getting at?" She decided to play Ritsuko's game.

"Check his birthday." The Major glanced back down at the file and read the date aloud. "September thirteenth, two-thousand. The same day as Second Impact." There was a momentary pause while Misato looked down at the file once again, flipping through the papers, but not doing anything more than merely glossing over them. "Where's the rest of his file?"

"That is his file, Major."

"No way." She shook her head while flipping back through the papers to see if there was anything she had missed. "There's hardly any information on him. There aren't even any records from before two-thousand-fourteen." Of course the Major had already expected something like this, but she was still hoping to know more about the Angel. Even Shinji didn't know much about his origin.

"That's because just like Rei, his history has been erased."

Katsuragi stopped and inhaled before closing the folder and tucking it under her arm. "What's the point of showing me all this? You've been so secretive up until now. What gives?"

"Let's just say that we may have different goals, but we share common enemies." Ritsuko's facial expression was unchanged.

"I'm getting sick and tired of this vague bullshit, Akagi!" Misato snapped, crossing her arms and gritting her teeth. "If you're going to tell me something, then just tell me already!"

Ritsuko took in a deep breath and sighed as she exhaled. Her posture starting to slouch just a little bit. "Would you believe me if I told you that Rei wasn't human?"

Misato stared at her for a moment, as if looking for the correct answer from within herself. She knew the origin of Rei; Shinji had told her about Rei being a clone of his mother Yui Ikari and the Second Angel. However, she still found it almost sickening about the concept of Rei being something inhuman was to her. Rei was a young girl, a young girl that she had watched over and even cared for to an extent. Perhaps not to the same extent as Asuka and Shinji, but even so, the sentiment was still there. "Yeah." She sighed, "Yeah, I'd believe you."

"Good," Ritsuko replied as she pulled out a black remote from her pocket. "Then perhaps this won't come as much of a shock to you." With the press of the button, orange lights illuminated the borders of the dark, circular room. Misato looked towards the lights and let out a gasp of horror at the sight. Outside of the confines of the room was a large pool of LCL, separated by thick layers of glass. Inside of the orange pools were countless nude humanoid figures floating around inside. For all intents and purposes, they looked exactly like Rei. They had pale skin, shoulder-length blue hair, and identical features to the Rei that she had come to know. The only thing that was different about them was their eyes. Their wide, crimson eyes remained void of any spark, any sign that there was a soul behind them. They just idly floated inside of the LCL, staring into the center of the room as though it was their only purpose in existence. "Oh my God." She let out, feeling her heart cease its beating for a good few seconds, causing her blood to run cold. "I..i..is that… Are those… those things Rei?"

"Indeed." Ritsuko answered, her tone void of anything more than mild interest. "We're inside of the Dummy Plug's core. The entire

Dummy Plug system itself is based on the thought patterns of these husks."

"Don't call them that!" Misato snarled, jerking around to face her. "These things are human, damn it!" She wasn't sure if she was trying to convince Ritsuko or herself of that. Apart from all the information she knew, Misato still found it disturbing to see the imagery herself.

"No, they're not." She shook her head, leaning back against the tube. "They're clones. Every single one of them. Just like Rei."

Katsuragi looked back at the soulless creatures and stared at them. All of them were void of any sign of a life of their own. They were hollow. Vacant. Empty. Nothing about them was human. "Rei is a human." Though she couldn't hold a defense for these shells made of flesh, she could stand for the strange, quiet girl she had grown to know over the past year.

"Rei is just like them." Akagi scoffed, revealing a tinge of disdain in her voice. "She's just a husk! A fake! She isn't a human! She's a creation! A science experiment!" Ritsuko's voice became louder and louder as anger started seeping through her tone. "She's… She's…." Stopping herself, the faux blonde took in a deep breath and looked down at her feet, allowing herself to recompose. "The point I'm trying to make is that Rei isn't human. You can make up whatever philosophical reasoning you want to convince yourself otherwise, but biologically, she isn't human. She's a creation. And for Kaworu to share so many similarities with her makes me believe that…"

"He's a clone as well?" Misato asked.

"Perhaps." She replied, lifting up the remote again, holding it merely inches from her face as she stared blankly at the device. "But I think he may be something more than that."

"Like what?" The Major fixed her eyes on Ritsuko, awaiting her answer. Closing her eyes, she let out a deep exhale. She was waiting for a good moment to tell her the truth.

"I don't know." With that, Dr. Akagi pressed the button on a remote, causing for the pool of LCL to bubble. Turning around to see what was going on, Misato watched as the numerous Rei clones began to break down before her very eyes, dissolving into the LCL.

"What the Hell are you doing?!" She spun back around and drew her pistol, aiming it at Ritsuko. The blonde moved her eyes to glace at Misato, but showed no signs of fear in her expression as she stared down the barrel of Katsuragi's 9-millimeter. If anything, she looked completely apathetic about it.

"Destroying the Dummy Plug." She replied.

"But why?!" The lavender-haired woman tightened her grip on the pistol, wrapping her finger around the trigger.

"I have my own reasons." She sighed. "If you're going to kill me, then just do it already. Quite frankly, I'd be happy about it."

Misato turned around while keeping her pistol aimed at Dr. Akagi and watched as the remains of the Rei clones continue to deteriorate. Though only bits and pieces of them remained, their eyes still carried the same void stare they had from the moments the lights came on. They merely continued staring on, blankly. No pain. No suffering. Nothing. If anything, killing these things was granting them mercy. She could have stopped her; she didn't because Shinji had told her that it was Rei's decision to let Ritsuko destroy the clones. She didn't want to be replaceable anymore. Misato shook her head and pulled out a pair of handcuffs from her pocket. "Put this on."

Ritsuko said nothing and took the handcuff from the Major. Silently putting them on, she kept her head low and walked toward the Major.

Misato sighed, "Look, Rits. I don't want to do this, but you've left me no choice." She walked behind the blonde, pushing her shoulder to give her the direction. "However, I have more to talk about the Sixth Child."

Ritsuko raised an eyebrow, "I don't really know more about him."

"He's probably the last Angel." Misato blurted out plainly.

The Major could feel clearly Ritsuko's body tensing up, "Wh-what makes you think that?" the truth was Ritsuko had been suspecting something like this; She knew why did Rei have the crimson eyes.

"Nothing. Just sixth-sense."

Shinji sat on the couch with Asuka cuddling on to him. The TV has been playing for hours, and none of the two pilots were paying attention anymore. They had just caught a break from a make-out session, and they were content with what they had. "Hey Asuka, what do we do with Kaworu?" Shinji suddenly spoke; his tone was a bit dry.

"Hmmm? Kaworu? The last Angel? The silver-haired narcissistic homosexual human-shaped Angel bastard you were talking about?" Asuka mocked, raising an eyebrow. Although she was a tsundere and tended to say things she didn't really mean, but this time she was being truthful with her impression of Kaworu.

"Don't say that, he was my friend." Shinji frowned. He didn't really wanted to contradict with his girlfriend, and he also knew some of the descriptions were kinda true, but Shinji was nothing but polite.

Asuka sighed, "I don't know what happened in your timeline, Shinji. But back in my timeline, he almost wasted no time and went directly for Lilith with my Unit 02. And you practically died because of him. How could I not hate him? And his whole attitude… it just creeps me out."

"Wh-what? Oh, I remembered you telling me that I got absorbed into Unit 01 again…" Shinji swallowed, sitting up straight from his cuddling position, "I don't want to fight him… although he is an Angel, but he is human enough to me."

"Yeah, yeah. He befriended you in your timeline, didn't he?"

Shinji nodded, "He was so nice to me. Although I had you that time, I still became his friend," Shinji sighed, "then just got betrayed by him."

Asuka pouted, "Hmph. It seemed my counterpart didn't do a good job keeping you private," she smiled evilly, climbing on top Shinji and looking down at him passionately; she deliberately revealed part of her breasts seductively, looking down at Shinji's blushed and wide-eyed face she continued, "Well Baka, I'm just claiming my property here!" Without another word, she leaned forward and pulled Shinji into a fierce kiss, who reciprocated with eagerness.

"Tadaima!" Misato's voice suddenly came from the door.

Both teens immediately flung away from each other; Asuka resumed her sitting position and quickly adjusted her messy hair and clothes, while Shinji stood up and rushed to the kitchen.

Misato came into the living room and saw Asuka first. Although her hair and clothes were not as messy, but from her expression and blush Misato could easily deduce what happened from her more than a decade experience on the subject of physical intimacy. "My, my, Asuka. I know today's been a little hot, and it certainly raised your hormonal level as well."

Asuka's blush grew deeper hearing the words, "What the hell are you implying by that? I'm not as indecent and irresponsible as an adult like you!"

"Just be careful, I know we don't have that many pilots around but we don't need little pilots yet," Misato teased with a wink, "unless…"

"OKAY THAT WAS IT!" Asuka shot up from the couch and attacked her guardian vigorously, who was laughing and running around trying to dodge the attacks. Asuka had been so frustrated that their

foreplay had been interrupted, and with the Major irritating her further she needed somewhere to vent her anger.

Shinji simply ignored the whole ordeal and immersed himself in cooking. Minutes later Asuka finally caught the Major, who was lying on the ground laughing and panting with Asuka sitting on her waist, looking down at her with an unreadable expression.

"Ticklish attack!" Asuka suddenly cried out, using her fingers to jab Misato's sensitive area.

The Major had yet to die down from the previous laughter and was sent into another wave of uncontrollable ecstasy. "Hahaha… s-stop, A-Asuka, Hahahaha… s-stop… Hahaha… p-please, i-it was my-my bad, aight? Hahaha…"

Seeing Misato begging for mercy, Asuka felt satisfied with the outcome and stopped tickling the poor Major. "Hmph. You asked for it!" She swiftly got off Misato, allowing the latter to stand up.

"Anyways, I wanted to talk about the new pilot," Misato said, her expression changed from the big-sister-Misato to Major Katsuragi in a blink of an eye, "What do we do with him?"

Asuka sat down on the couch, her head resting in her palm, "well, I'd say we kill him; it's that easy." She never felt anything towards the Angel boy, much less compassion. To be honest, if it was not Shinji she would gladly end his life with her EVA, although it didn't exist anymore. Thinking rationally, it was the only way; Kaworu was an Angel, it was him or the humanity. In this kind of situation, Asuka had always been thinking with logic, while Shinji seemed to think with more emotions involved.

However Asuka could understand why it was hard for Shinji to kill Kaworu. After all, she was not a coldhearted individual. It would definitely be difficult for someone to kill their friend. Hell, normal people would hesitate just by the appearance of Kaworu; he looked too much like a human. Asuka tried to think what if Hikari was the

final Angel and how she would act; not surprisingly, she found it impossible to decide. It was then she felt empathetic towards her boyfriend.

"Dinner's almost ready!" Shinji's announcement snapped Asuka out of her train of thought, "Good! I smell Sauerkraut."

Misato decided that their conversation could wait. While she and Asuka waited around the table, Rei's voice suddenly came, "Tadaima."

"Rei! Welcome," Misato turned her head towards the entrance seeing a blue-haired girl emerging, "we're just about to have dinner; you can join us if you want!"

"I will not be joining your meal," Rei said with a bit of sadness in her tone.

"Why, wondergirl? You don't like Baka-Shinji's cooking? Well too bad he actually made something vegetarian today!" Asuka said.

"I did not inform Shinji-kun in advance about my visit. He had already started cooking then. I do not think he made my portion; thus, I would not be joining," Rei said in a matter-of-fact tone.

"That's no problem, Shinji and I can share our food with you! It's not like we needed to eat them to stay alive anyway," Asuka said.

Shinji turned around as well, "Actually, Rei, I messed up portioning and there will be extra food and I was wondering how to deal with it," Shinji smiled a little, "If you'd join us, you'd be solving a big problem."

Rei also smiled, "Your proposal is acceptable; I will be joining your meal."

With that being said the pilots and the Major all sat around the table, waiting for the meal to be served. Shinji came and placed the plates; the smell of the food was so good that Asuka and Misato wasted no

time starting to devour their portion. Rei, on the other hand, was much gentler. Shinji joined them quickly. The happy family ate in comfortable silence, content expressions on their faces.

A quarter hour later, everyone had finished the meal; Misato was the first to stand up, "Rei, would you like to stay here for a while? We have something to discuss." The truth was she was hoping to talk with Rei about Kaworu in the beginning, but she wasn't able to find her in her apartment. Now Rei just came here herself, much to the Major's surprise.

"I do plan to stay here to discuss matters about Nagisa; it is my purpose coming here in the first place," Rei replied.

"O-okay," Misato said; she didn't expect the response, but she didn't mind it. "Alright, guys, now serious stuff. What do we plan to do with him?" She put her index finger on Asuka's lips before she could say anything.

"Emmm, I-he's an Angel, so… although I don't want to, but… I mean… he's a human, at least he looked like a human… maybe he's like us?" Shinji said, his expression sad and melancholy. He knew what he had to do, but he's nothing if not sympathetic and kind.

"I am aware of the fact that Shinji, Asuka, and me all possess Angelic powers but in human form," Rei said, "but we do not experience the Call from Adam or Lilith."

Misato sighed, "I know that Rei. And that's exactly the reason why we have to… neutralize him." She turned her gaze to Shinji, "I'm sorry, Shin-chan. It has to be done."

"I-I understand, Misato-san," Shinji replied, "I-I just… I don't think I'm able to do it."

"Well then I'll do it for you!" Asuka said, "I don't want you to bear the burden, Shinji. Leave the responsibility to our best pilot, shall we?"

"Asuka… but NERV thinks you're dead from the self-destruct of Unit 02, aren't they?"

"Damn it, I forgot about that…" Asuka sighed in defeat.

"Considering now we only have Unit 00 that is made from Adam, he would have no choice but hijack it," Rei said, "that leaves the responsibility to you, Shinji-kun."

"I-I guess… but, I still want to talk to him." Shinji said, his voice sorrowful.

Asuka sighed, "Baka, do whatever you want. Just… be careful, okay? I'm sure he noticed your AT-Field, just like Rei and I do."

"That is correct. Nephilim could sense other's AT-Fields. He must have been aware of your powers," Rei followed nonchalantly, her gaze fixated on her half-brother.

"Thanks," Shinji said with a warm smile, "I will."

Kaworu looked up at the ceiling of his room while he laid on his bed, his hands rested behind his head. The words that Shinji had said had been running through his head for hours, and yet he still couldn't come to a true understanding of them. He found it almost mind-boggling that a human could be satisfied with only having those they care about. Before today he knew humans only as vile and power-hungry creatures. They sought out nothing but personal gain. Yet here was this child who had seen more horrors in a year than most see in their entire lives, and all he desired was to be with his loved ones. Were most humans like this?

'But… he's not exactly Lilin, is he?' Kaworu thought, 'but I can still sense in most of my other lives I befriended Shinji. Maybe his heart is pure.'

In the end though, it didn't matter what he believed. Regardless of his personal feelings of the matter, he was bound to Adam, and in turn destined to return to him. Once he was reunited with the father of Angels, then all life on this world would come to an end, and a new one would rise from the remains. This would herald in a new age, an age in which Angels would rule over this planet, thriving and flourishing in that which they would claim as their new home; An age in which the lives of an insignificant race would be exchanged for the lives of one that was just slightly more significant.

"Rei, I have a request for you." Fuyutsuki intercepted Rei in the hallway leading to the change rooms, "Could you please come with me for a second?"

It was rare for Fuyutsuki to *ask,* much less ask *Rei* . He could have ordered Rei to come with him; he was the Sub-Commander, after all. Now with Gendo missing, he was the actual Commander of NERV. But for some reason, he decided to kindly ask.

Rei Ayanami had just come out from her EVA after a sync test. She was surprised at Fuyutsuki's behavior, not only by the fact that he actually asked, but also by calling her name, not just 'Pilot Ayanami.' "Yes, Sub-Commander Fuyutsuki."

Fuyutsuki smiled, "This way. Please follow me." He led the way to a small office; Rei followed him and entered the room. Closing the door behind him, Fuyutsuki continued, "Rei, please go down to Central Dogma, and wait for the last Angel to attack."

Rei blinked, "The last Angel?" She was surprised that NERV actually knew who the last Angel was.

"Thanks to some unknown informant, now we have sufficient intel to confirm the Sixth Child, Kaworu Nagisa, is the last Angel. Go to Central Dogma and wait; nullify his AT-Field with yours when the time comes."

Rei nodded, "Yes, sir."

The sound of music flowed from Shinji's headphones and through his ears while he sat on a bench. He just came out from the sync test and finished showering, waiting for Rei and Misato to go home together.

"Shinji." A voice called out to him, catching his attention. Shinji looked up as a familiar silver-haired pilot approached him, a smile on his face.

"Oh, hey Kaworu." He returned the smile. "What're you doing here?" Shinji was waiting for another time and place to talk to Kaworu since there were surveillance cameras everywhere inside NERV medical wing. Still, if he came to him, then there was no reason to reject.

Nagisa's sharp crimson eyes softened a little, along with the rest of his features. "I heard you were here. So I thought I'd stop by and say hi." He answered before looking towards the empty seat next to the pilot of Unit D. "Mind if I take a seat?"

"Of course not." Shinji said, scooting over to the side to allow some more room for him to sit. "Go ahead." Slowly, the silver-haired pilot turned around and lowered himself onto the cushioned bench, resting one of his legs on his knee while leaning his back against the wall. "So how are you, Shinji?" He asked, his tone a little more mellow than normal.

"I'm fine." He replied, rolling up the wires of his headphones around his SDAT before putting it in his pocket. "Are you alright, Kaworu? You seem a little… down, I guess?"

A faint grin emerged on Kaworu's features, just barely exposing some of the white in his teeth. "Shinji, could you please tell me why it is that your loved ones mean so much to you?"

Shinji blinked, a bit taken back by the question. "Huh?"

"You said that if you could have just one thing, one simple wish, it would be to have all of those you care about with you." He turned his head to face Shinji, his grin still present. "Why is that?"

Shinji found himself remaining silent for a moment. He never really thought about why that was all he really wanted; he just knew that was what he wanted. It was just one of those things that instinctively he desired more than anything else. The idea of having someone who cared about him was all he ever sought out for. That was the very reason he began piloting Unit 01 in the first place, so he could obtain his father's affection. After he realized that his father wanted nothing to do with him on an emotional level, then he just filled that void by embracing the affection he found with Asuka, Rei, Misato, Kensuke, and Toji. During the end of the world in his timeline, at that moment in time, he felt as though he had tumbled into the ultimate pit of despair, and it was then that Shinji truly realized how much his friends and loved ones meant to him. "Because I don't want to lose them." Shinji spoke, lowering his head and letting his bangs fall partly over his eyes. "If I lost them, then I wouldn't have anything really. I mean, what's the point of living your life if there is nobody who makes it worthwhile?"

"Some people live only for self gain." Kaworu said.

"Everyone is different." He retorted. "Some people are fine with having nobody but themselves, but most people aren't like that." He rose his head and met Kaworu's crimson eyes with his hazel. "It's the bonds that we form with those we care about that make us stronger, really. I mean, if Asuka wasn't there to yell at me and tell me when I was doing something wrong, I wouldn't be the person I am now. Ha, she practically saved my life one time. And I'm always with her as well, showing her that she isn't alone."

"But do you think that they feel the same way about you?"

"Of course I do!" Shinji found himself quite surprised that his answer came so quickly and with such passion. Kaworu bit down on his upper lip and averted his eyes from Shinji, looking straight forward.

"I see." He murmured. "So are you saying that you think that most Lil-… I mean, most humans are all like this? That they live not just for themselves, but for the sake of others as well?"

"I like to think so." He nodded. "Yeah." Nagisa remained silent for a moment before lifting himself up from the bench. "I think I understand, then."

"Understand what?" Shinji asked, looking at the silver-haired teen with a perplexed expression on his face. "That Lilin truly is a blessed race; they may deserve another chance." He replied, turning back to face Shinji. Shinji found himself frozen in place as he saw Kaworu lower his head down to Shinji's level and begin to close in the distance between their faces, his lips slightly puckered, but his crimson eyes open, staring directly into Ikari's.

"Wait, Kaworu, stop!" Quickly, Shinji slid out from around Nagisa and stood on his feet, causing for the silver haired boy to give him a slightly puzzled expression. "I'm sorry, Kaworu, but I…" He stopped as he felt his cheeks grow hot, blushing. "You're a good friend Kaworu, but I just don't feel that way about you." Smirking, the fair-skinned boy managed a smile, showing no offense in Shinji's rejection.

"I know you don't, Shinji." He spoke, putting his hands down to his sides. "I don't think you ever could, either."

"What do you…"

"Goodbye, Shinji." Kaworu stepped backward. Without so much as another word, the silver-haired boy turned around and made his way down the hall towards the elevator, leaving Shinji standing alone in the hall.

The blue and white face of Evangelion Unit 00 stared vacantly at Kaworu as he made his way across the catwalk. Each step he took echoed throughout the cages until he finally came to a stop in front

of the EVA. Letting out a sigh, Kaworu knew that this had to be done. He really didn't want to do this, especially after the talk he had with Shinji. However, it was something he had been postponing for a long time now, and couldn't ignore for any longer. Kaworu and watched as his feet slowly began to lift off of the catwalk as he began floating towards the sleeping Evangelion.

"Come on, Let's go." Kaworu said, looking directly at the EVA, "Come with me, Adam's alter ego, servant of the Lilin." He stepped forward into the air, his AT-Field supporting his weight. The dark-red lense slits around the Evangelion's eyes began to glow with a brilliant white light. The EVA started to roar; it continued on for another few seconds before beginning to fade away, while Kaworu and Unit 00 were gone, leaving only the sleeping Unit D. A red light began to flash throughout the room and a high-pitched alarm sounded throughout the entire facility. An Angel alert.

"A developing AT-Field has been detected in Central Dogma!" Makoto looked at his terminal, which was flashing red warning signs. "Pattern blue! It's hijacked Unit 00 and descending down to Central Dogma!" Makoto reported, "Not good! It's already breached level four!"

"Emergency locked down! Close all partitions in Central Dogma!" Fuyutsuki ordered, slamming his fist on the desk. "It'll buy us some time, no matter how little!" 'Rei, it's up to you know,' he thought, 'the last Angel must be defeated.'

"Where's the pilot of Unit D? Where's Shinji?" Misato shouted, "Send Unit D to intercept the Angel!"

"He's already waiting in the entry plug!" Aoba scanned through the security cameras, "Activating Unit D!"

"Shinji, listen, the Sixth Child, Kaworu Nagisa is an Angel; your order is to eliminate it at all costs!" Although she didn't really need to say that, she still needed to maintain a sense of formality.

"Roger." Shinji's voice was calm but a little bit unsure. He still had so much he wanted to ask and talk about with Kaworu, and it seemed there wasn't much time left for him.

Kaworu and the blue Evangelion began their descent towards the black abyss that awaited them at the bottom of the elevator shaft leading to Terminal Dogma. Even from down here he could still hear the blaring sound of NERV's alarm echoing down the chute. He frowned as he thought about what awaited him at the bottom of this long descent. Once he was one with Adam, the race of Lilin would come to an end, and the creatures that he had started to grow quite fond of would be no more. Perhaps that was why he felt a tinge of warmth in his heart when he heard the blood lusted screams of Unit D's pilot as the purple-crimson Evangelion shot downwards towards him and Unit 00, its progressive knife in hand.

"Kaworu, wait!" The brown-haired pilot screamed, gritting his teeth as he quickly continued on his approach. "How could you do this to us!" Frowning, Nagisa lowered his head. "Please believe me when I say that I wish it didn't have to come to this, Shinji. However, it is my destiny. All born from Adam are fated to return to Adam."

"Liar!" Shinji cried as Unit D's fist slammed into the face of Unit 00, forcing it to topple in the air as it continued falling down the chute. "You aren't bound to anything! You don't have to do anything you don't want to!" The Angel closed his eyes and shook his head. "If only that were true, Shinji. Us Angels are not given the gift of free will like you Lilin are. Unfortunately this is how it must be."

"Kaworu!" Shinji growled, swinging Unit D's giant hand at the person he used to consider his friend in his own timeline. "How about Asuka and me? How about Rei? You know about us, right? We don't need to do this, you don't either!" His statement, including the mention of Asuka, was vague enough to leave everyone on the Command desk dumbfounded except Misato, but Kaworu knew very well what he meant. He increased his AT-Field output, effectively blocking all electromagnetic waves from escaping; this way no one up there

would know what they would be talking. "Shinji-kun, the moment I saw you, I knew you possess the power of Angels. From what you said I can assume the Second Child possess it as well. I totally did not anticipate this; I can't recall anything like this happening from all my other lives."

Shinji blinked at the mention of 'all my other lives,' "Wha-what do you mean, Kaworu? Are you from another universe?"

"Another Universe? No, of course not," Kaworu's eyes narrowed a millimeter, "I guess it would hurt to tell you. The universe we're at is a cyclic universe. From the moment Second Impact started, it entered an endless cycle, from then to the end of Third Impact." Kaworu paused a few seconds, waiting for Shinji to digest the information, "From the little what I can recall from my previous lives, every time the world ended with Instrumentality initiated by you, Ikari Shinji-kun. My recollections are only faint sensations, not clear memories."

Shinji was dumbstruck at Kaworu's words. A cyclic world? What about Asuka and his worlds? Those worlds were separate, that he was sure of. But Kaworu said this universe he was at right now had been going through countless cycles; apparently each time ended with a Third Impact initiated by his counterparts. "I don't understand, Kaworu!"

"I am very curious, Shinji-kun. You and the Second Child were never meant to possess Angelic powers." Kaworu's grin faded, "at least in *this* universe."

Shinji felt a sense of dread at Kaworu's emphasis on 'this universe'. He briefly assessed his situation; there wouldn't be any loss if he tells him about his true origin, in fact he may get more answers this way. "Kaworu, I-I'm actually from a parallel universe."

Kaworu's expression turned into a frown, which had never happened once in his countless lives. "Shinji-kun, do you know the reason this universe had been in a cycle?" Hearing no replies from Shinji who was still fighting Unit 00, he continued, "Every time after Third

Impact, you would reject the reality; at that time you had the power of Gods. Thus the world listened to your wish and reset. You wouldn't hold any memories, of course. The restarted worlds would sometimes experience a slightly different path, but every one of them ended with Third Impact. Then you would reject it again, and the cycle went on."

"Wha-what?" Now Shinji was really dumbfounded, "What about the universe I came from, then?"

"I do not know how did you come here, nor I know what would happen with your universe. My guess will be you wished for something different during Instrumentality," Kaworu explained, "with Lilith, Adam, and the entire human race, the power could breach the barrier between universes."

"However, the flow of time was one thing irresistible, even with the power of Adam and Lilith combined. They only could reset the world, but time went on."

"Every cycle starts after Second Impact, and ends with Third Impact."

"Who knows how long had passed since the first cycle? One thousand, one hundred thousand, even one million years? The world resets, but the universe wouldn't stop moving forward. The time the universe ends, then it will be the end of everything, including Adam and Lilith."

"Meanwhile, the human race could only stay in this endless cycle and suffer. My reunion with Adam would put an end to this meaningless suffering, Shinji-kun." Kaworu finished his speech, smiling at Shinji.

Shinji was frozen in place at his words. He had no way of knowing whether they were truthful or not; he didn't want to believe him, either. It would put a ton of weight on anyone who had just learned

that they had ended the world countless times. "Y-you are joking, right, Kaworu? I… I ended the world countless times?"

"Indeed, Shinji-kun. I can see your heart is pure, and I wish no pain to you." Kaworu said, "Let me end this, so none of you could feel any more pain."

With his speech stopping, Kaworu and both EVA units finally breached the final layer of armor, and they all fell to the ground, raising clouds of dust. Kaworu took a final look at the still-fighting Unit D and Unit 00, then turned around and floated towards his destiny.

Up in the Command Center, all hands were on deck and watching from the security cameras as Unit D combated against Kaworu and the rogue Unit 00, save for and Sub-Commander Fuyutsuki. Misato's grip on the back of Hyuga's chair tightened as she watched them fall closer and closer to the depths of Terminal Dogma. It would be only a matter of minutes until they reached it, at which point nothing would stand between Kaworu and the bulbous humanoid that was Lilith. Misato knew it was not Adam down there, but she didn't know what would happen with an Angel-Lilith fusion. She was not going to take the risk. "If the Angel reaches Terminal Dogma, I want you to activate the self-destruct system." The lavender-haired woman gulped as she watched the three dots on the map hovering in front of them grow closer and closer to the bottom. "It'd be better for us to die than for all of humanity to be annihilated."

"I understand." Hyuga replied, taking in a deep breath as he bit down on his lower lip. "I mean, dying next to you wouldn't be so bad, right?" The engineer forced a smile, trying to retain a strong front, but it was quite clear that he was having trouble holding it all together. With a warm smile, Misato placed a hand on Hyuga's shoulder. "Thanks Hyuga."

Back in the depths of NERV Headquarters, the fight raged on between the EVAs. Though Unit D had its enemy flanked, it wasn't appearing to do them any good. Unit 00's reaction time was just so

inhumanly fast and precise that any opening it presented itself with was quickly covered before a blow could be delivered.

Kaworu exhaled as the fight continued. He could practically feel the presence of his kin now. Taking in a deep breath, the Angel put forth the strongest AT-Field he could possibly muster, illuminating the whole interior of Terminal Dogma with a brilliant light. After the initial flash, darkness overcame everything, save for the two Evangelions that fought behind him.

"Major Katsuragi!" Hyuga jumped up from his seat as the lights inside of the Command Center cut off, leaving them in almost complete darkness. "The Angel has just generated the strongest AT-Field I've ever seen! It's completely blocking out everything! Light, radar, everything!"

"Damn it!" Misato stomped her boot onto the ground, gritting her teeth. "Just blow the damn thing! There's nothing we can do now!"

"I can't!" The technician replied frantically. "Everything is shut down! I think the AT-Field caused some sort of pseudo EMP blast!" Feeling her heart come to a stop, Misato felt all of the breath in her lungs leave her body in a gasp. "Then that means it's all up to Shinji now. There's nothing we can do."

Kaworu could feel the radiation of the presence of an Angel, the presence of his kin. He was growing very close.

Meanwhile, Unit D finally disabled Unit 00 with a fatal blow delivered to its head, and sprinted through Terminal Dogma, following Kaworu. With each step that he took, he could feel the Angel raising an AT-Field to hinder his progress. However each one was ripped through like paper; he didn't understand what had caused his AT-Field to decrease in strength, but he didn't care about it that time.

"Kaworu, stop!" Shinji called out to the silver-haired boy as he floated across the large chamber, venturing farther into the darkness. "I'm sorry, Shinji. But you know that I can't do that." He replied, raising

another AT-Field between him and Unit D. With a hard punch, the purple mech tore through it and continued its progress towards the Angel. Frowning, Kaworu continued on, following Adam's call, feeling it radiating through his body.

He finally came right in front of the giant white humanoid; looking at its masked face, Kaworu said, "Adam, our mother. Must all born from Adam return to Adam? Even at the cost of destroying humanity?" His eyes narrowed an inch when he noticed something was wrong, "No, this is not Adam! This is… Lilith?" An expression of shock and comprehension washed over his face, "I see, so that's what this is about, Lilin." Suddenly it all came together as he gazed at the giant figure mounted to the blood red cross. This entire time he thought he had been the one manipulating SEELE, when it was actually SEELE who had been manipulating him. They knew that he would expose himself as the final Angel and venture forth to become one with Adam, only to discover that it was not Adam who awaited him. They had used him for their science experiment and repaid him by sending him into a deathtrap.

Shinji ripped through the final layer of AT-Field and rushed to the floating Angel, grabbing him firmly in his hands.

"Thank you, Shinji-kun." Kaworu smiled, "I wanted you to defeat Unit 00." In a way he found this to be a relief. He had failed, and by failing, that meant that the human race as a whole would continue to survive. However, that still meant that he had to face his end before such a thing could be achieved, added that the human race would go on for another cycle. He didn't know why he couldn't remember the crucial fact that it was Lilith inside Terminal Dogma; maybe it had something to do with quantum mechanics; because the world was still in a cycle, that means he HAD to NOT know about it; otherwise the world would have already ended.

Kaworu could only hope Shinji will make the right decision this time; this Shinji was from another universe, after all. Maybe his presence could bring an end to this meaningless cycle.

"Why, Kaworu, why?" Shinji asked, his hands gritting tightly around the control yokes.

"The truth is that I don't wish for any harm to come to you. You have shown me a side of Lilin that I didn't even know existed. A beautiful, tender side, and because of that, I feel empathy for you. I think… that I love you, Shinji-kun. Is this what love is about?"

"B..but I…" Shinji could mutter a meaningful sentence; although he didn't 'love' Kaworu since his 'love' had been Asuka's, he still found it made things much more complex.

"Do it, Shinji." Kaworu spoke. "You know what you have to do. If you wish for humanity to survive, then you must kill me."

Shinji felt his heart begin to race, and his body grew cold. "Kaworu…" The silver-haired boy remained silent as he looked up at the face of Unit 01, a warm smile spread across his face. There was no fear, no anger, no sadness, none of those emotions Shinji expected to see. What he did see though, was the look of hope. Hope that perhaps through his own death, Kaworu could save humanity as a whole.

"Shinji-kun, now I can't bring this world to salvation, the responsibility lies on your shoulders." Kaworu said, "I can only hope you make the right choice this time, Shinji-kun."

Shinji's heart was beating so fast that it felt like a freight train was about to burst out of his chest. He didn't want to do it, but he knew that he had to. Closing his eyes, Shinji thought about all of those whose lives would end if he couldn't do this, if he couldn't go through with killing Kaworu. Asuka, Rei, Misato, Kensuke, Hikari, Hyuga, Maya, Aoba, Ritsuko, Fuyutsuki, his own father… All of these lives would come to an end, if he didn't end this right here and right now.

Although he knew the white giant was Lilith, not Adam, and it was probably one of the main reasons Kaworu stopped attacking, he also knew Kaworu was truthful about his feeling towards him, or rather,

mankind. 'I'll have to make the right choice,' Shinji thought, 'the right choice…'

"I'm sorry, Kaworu." Then with just the slightest movement of his hand, it was over.

The cool breeze gently blew across Shinji's arms while he stood on the edge of the balcony of his apartment, overlooking the night sky above him. The stars and moonlight shone down and illuminated onto him as his conversations with Kaworu played over and over again in his head.

Letting out an exhale, Shinji could hear the sound of shoes brushing against the floor behind him, but paid no mind as the sound grew nearer. The form of a redheaded girl stood next to him, leaning onto his body for warmth. "Misato and Rei's worried about you." Asuka spoke. "And I'm worried about you too."

"Of course you are, darling," Shinji said with a warm smile, keeping his gaze focused on the sky above him.

"Look, you did what you had to. It was either Kaworu or the world. You made the right decision by killing him. I know that probably doesn't make you feel any better, but that's all there is to it."

"It's so easy for you to say that." Shinji murmured, "It's so easy to say that when you didn't have to look into his eyes and watch him die."

"You're right Shinji. It is that easy for me. It is that easy for me to be so black and white about it. Believe me, if I could go back in time and kill him in your place, I would! It should've been me that killed Kaworu, not you! I can live with taking somebody else's life. I can carry that burden, but the fact is we can't change what's already happened. So you just have to learn to accept it, or else it'll eat you away." Taking a breath, Asuka turned her eyes back up to the stars. "Sure, it's not the way we wanted for things to go, but it's just the way

they are. You have to just accept them and move on." Asuka pulled Shinji into a loose embrace, sharing the body warmth while not applying too much pressure on his already stressed mentality.

"I'll wait for you in our room once you've done thinking, alright?" With that being said, Asuka turned around and walked to the door.

"Asuka," He muttered, hearing her footsteps draw farther and farther away from him, each step becoming quieter than the last. "Wait." The redhead stopped mid-stride, and partially turned her body to face Shinji.

"What, Liebling?"

"What do you think Kaworu would want?" Shinji asked, "he told me about… a lot of disturbing things. Things I might have done. And he told me to make the right choice this time. I-I just don't know what to do anymore."

The redhead inhaled, and then slowly exhaled. Her sapphire eyes remained unmoved from Shinji's figure as she contemplated the statement. "We'll… talk about it later, after… bed, sounds good to you?" The Second Child smiled encouragingly, "Don't keep me waiting, Baka."

The hormonal rush after hearing the words temporarily suppressed all the self-loathing and chaotic thoughts; Shinji smiled shyly with a slight blush to his face, "I'm coming, Asuka."

AN: IMPORTANT MUST READ

So yes, what I meant by Kaworu's other lives were his experiences in this particular universe, not other parallel universes. This universe, just like Kaworu said, was a cyclic world. Countless cycles had been started and ended. What will happen with this cyclic universe? Why did Lilith send Shinji and Asuka to this universe? We'll get our answers in the next few chapters.

In the original series, during the last Angel fight Rei was also down in Central Dogma; her AT-Field blocked everything, also nullifying Kaworu's AT-Field. And we all know who the 'unknown informant' was, right? :/

This is not the End

AN: We are almost at the end of the journey!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 16: This is not the End

The Command Center of NERV Headquarters remained alive and active. The entire facility had remained on a first-level alert ever since the final Angel had been destroyed, though they had no idea why. There were no more Angels. This was peacetime, technically. At least that's what the three bridge bunnies wanted to believe.

"So what do you think they'll do with us now?" Maya asked, sitting back in her chair while looking over to Hyuga and Aoba. "With all of the Angels dead, what more is there for us to do?"

"If I had to guess, I figure they're probably going to disband NERV before too long." Aoba replied, gazing down at the third level command deck below which remained empty and void of any personnel. "I don't even want to think about what they'll do with us, though."

"You're being paranoid." Hyuga sighed, adjusting his glasses. "We'll probably end up just like everyone else who gets involved in decommissioned military projects."

"And what's that supposed to mean?" Maya inquired, turning in her chair towards Hyuga. "We'll be released from duty and end up taking some crappy government job to pay the rent." Aoba and Maya managed a forced chuckle at the comment. "At least we won't have to worry about the end of the world, right?" Aoba smirked.

"Yeah." Hyuga nodded, looking down at the floor as the room started to fall into silence. All three of them let out a sigh, wondering what would actually become of them now. All three of them had practically

dedicated their lives to NERV. They had little expertise outside of Project E. What's worse, they were technicians; unlike Dr. Akagi, who was more on the theoretics side, they had basically no use other than monitoring the EVAs.

"I wish Dr. Akagi was here." Maya let out, chewing the cookies. "She always knows what to do."

SEELE 01: "The scenario indeed had made several undesirable diversions; however, the end result is unproblematic. We now have both Lilith and the Lance of Longinus available, with the help of the EVA series, Instrumentality shall begin at any moment."

SEELE 03: "Are you sure about that, Keel? Gendo is missing. We don't know where Adam is yet."

SEELE 05: "We have sufficient evidence that Gendo will betray us at the last moment. Without him, there's one less obstacle we need to deal with."

SEELE 04: "Rei seems to be not loyal to us anymore as well. This could make things more complicated."

SEELE 08: "The Second Child should be dead, as Unit 02 self-destructed. Unit 00 was badly damaged during the battle against the seventeenth Angel. There's only Unit D available for NERV at the moment."

SEELE 11: "We should kill the pilots at first. The Children only exist as potential threats."

SEELE 01: "Correct. Commence the extermination of the pilots."

"Cyclic universe?" Asuka narrowed her eyes, "tell me you're serious."

"There's no point of joking about something like this," Shinji retorted, "at least it's what Kaworu said. I find it hard to believe, either."

"This is an intriguing idea that actually happens," Rei stated, "he was not wrong. With the power of Adam and Lilith combined, the world could reset."

Shinji looked like he had something on his mind, quickly slumping down, and his face became clouded. Asuka didn't even need to think to know what he was sulking on. "Hey, idiot. I know what you're thinking. It's not your fault. It's not you you. Different interactions with people around us make us different people. Yes, the previous Shinji's may have your name and look like you, but they are not you. You don't need to feel guilty about something they had done; instead, you need to make sure this time you'll make the right choice!"

"Asuka's right, Shin-chan." Misato sighed, "I know it sounds weird that the fate of the world is in the hands of some fourteen-year-old boy, but we don't have any choice, do we?"

Shinji seemed to cheer up a little, "Thanks. I think I'll just destroy all MP EVAs, then Third Impact won't even start, right?"

"The Lance of Longinus is still at Lilith's place. Technically it could still happen." Rei replied, suddenly her eyes widened as she remembered an important detail, "Where is Adam?"

Shinji and Asuka looked around, finding Rei and Misato looking at them expectantly. "Rei… were you asking me?" Rei nodded, "and also Asuka."

"I… don't know?" Shinji was surprised that there was actually something he didn't know; it wasn't his fault since he had no way of knowing Adam was planted in his father's hand. Turning his eyes to Asuka, who just shook her head and shrugged.

Rei's body tensed up, "This is very serious. We need to destroy Adam, as well as all the EVAs, including Unit 00. They were made from Adam, and once they awaken, they could start an Impact-level event." She turned to look at Asuka, "Asuka, where did you drop Gendo?"

"I dropped him into the tube where they used to put you in," Asuka answered, "you know the one in Central Dogma."

"Oh shit." Misato cursed, "that's not good."

"What? What's wrong? I guess he could live happily inside the LCL…"

"There is no need to worry," Rei said calmly, "The tank and the tube were separated. Destroying my clones in the tank should have no effect on what's inside the tube; in fact, it was a safety measure installed by Dr. Akagi."

Misato let out an exhale of relief, "Thank God… but it's still creepy to know when Rits destroyed the clones, he was right there. Maybe he heard our conversation…"

BOOM

A loud explosion cut her off; a huge hole appeared on the wall, clouds of dust and debris blurred their visions. The huge noise caused temporary concussions to the occupants of the room; while they were recovering from dizziness, a group of soldiers rushed into the apartment with MP5 submachine guns holding in their hands.

Asuka regained her composure the first, but her brain was still processing all the information. One of the soldiers took out a walkie-talkie and spoke, "Target located. Requesting permission to engage."

"Affirmative. Fire at will."

"Roger," the soldier said, pointing his gun at Asuka, while gesturing the others to aim at the others, "Sorry, kid. Nothing personal."

The muzzles flashed and bullets burst out. Asuka instinctively extended her AT-Field, effectively blocking the rain of metals. The soldiers were dumbstruck as they saw an orange octangular light appeared in front of them, and their bullets were all deflected to elsewhere.

"Wha-"

"Sorry, nothing personal." Asuka said with a venomous glare, pushing her AT-Field forward, crashing against the group of soldiers. They were instantly shoveled away and flew backward, some of them fell off the balcony. Asuka couldn't care more about their lives; after all, it was a life-death situation.

Shinji, Rei, and Misato also recovered from their concussions. Not wasting her years of professional military training, Misato pulled out her pistol and aimed at the assassins who were still trying to get up. Without hesitation, she emptied her magazine, sending several soldiers straight to God.

Shinji, on the other hand, was neither mentally prepared for the attack nor killing other people; he simply froze in place, mouth agape. Rei concentrated on sensing the human's AT-Fields, trying to see if there were more of the soldiers out there.

"This… didn't happen back then," Asuka murmured, looking at the bodies on the floor.

"We should go to NERV Headquarters immediately." Rei spoke, "Shinji, Asuka, you need to get inside your EVA."

"What about you, Rei?" Asuka asked.

"I will find Commander Ikari and Adam."

"Okay. Shinji, take Misato and Rei to the Geofront, now!"

Shinji shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts. "S-sure, Asuka. What are you gonna do?"

"Anta Baka? They are clearly after the pilots, right? That means Hikari and Toji might be in danger as well! I need to make sure they are safe!" Asuka answered, summoning a small sea of Dirac, "Now go!"

Toji Suzuhara was having a good time with his girlfriend. He was happy that he could finally cuddle with Hikari on the couch, watching a horror movie. Hikari's father took out her two sisters for dinner, leaving her some time alone with the Jock.

"She reminds me of the Red Devil," Toji commented as he saw a ghost in red on TV, "damn, even the hair color matches."

"Toji! Asuka's my friend! It's not good to say that!" Hikari frowned a little, her tone slightly disapproving.

"Heh, it's not like she can hear me! I'll try not to call her that in front of her, sounds good?"

"Okay. Promise." Hikari jabbed him.

"Alright, alright. I, Toji Suzuhara, promise that I won't call Asuka Langley Soryu the Red Devil in her vicinity."

"Then your promise is already broken, gorilla!"

Both Hikari and Toji jerked their heads to the source of the voice, just to see Asuka standing right beside them, glaring at the Jock.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?! HOW DID YOU GET IN?!" Toji yelled, quickly disentangling himself from Hikari, who was in shell shock and unable to articulate any words.

"Listen, I don't have time to explain, just come with me!"

"Speak of the Devil… What for? We're having…" He was interrupted by the sound of the front door being kicked open, and a group of soldiers rushed in. Without hesitation, they aimed and fired; Toji and Hikari were like deers caught in the headlight, unable to fight nor flight. Asuka deployed her AT-Field just in time, blocking all the bullets. The soldiers weres dumbfounded by the sight; Asuka utilized their moment of distraction and pulled her friend and the Jock into the sea of Dirac.

SEELE 03: "Our assassination attempts seemed to fail. The pilots are still alive, and presumably already inside NERV Headquarters."

SEELE 01: "That is indeed unexpected. The assassins we sent were all professional. We do not have more spare time. Commence the attack."

SEELE 05: "I'll contact other NERV branches and inform them to start hacking the-"

SEELE 01: "That is not necessary. Launch the invasion forces immediately," a pause, "and leave none alive."

Tokyo-3 remained deathly silent as squads of highly trained armed soldiers clad in black slithered through the trees and bushes, silently making their way closer to the entrance of the GeoFront. Lines of tanks, humvees, and missile trucks rushed along the empty roads, lining all along the outskirts of Tokyo-3. The General who was leading this operation had always been one of the anti-NERV and anti-EVA officers. However, he found himself taking no pleasure in this attack. The orders he was given were to kill all NERV personnel on sight without hesitation. Security, technicians, maintenance workers, even the janitors. Anyone who was inside of NERV Headquarters and wasn't a JSSDF soldier was to be killed on the spot.

"Are you alright, sir?" The driver asked, looking over at the older man who was rubbing his index finger and his thumb against his temples. "I'm fine." He grunted, opening the door and stepping out onto the road. As he made his way over to the edge of the cliff, he pulled out a pair of binoculars and zoomed in on the cityscape of Tokyo-3.

"Are all troops in position?" He asked, looking up and down at the empty city. He took a bit of solace in seeing that the Tokyo-3 was as empty, just as SEELE claimed it was. He was well aware that there was going to be a massive amount of blood spilled today, and the last thing he wanted was for some of it to be the blood of innocent civilians.

"Yes sir." His Second Lieutenant nodded, stepping up next to the General. "All infantry soldiers are ready and waiting for your orders."

The General sighed in disapproval of his actions, letting down the binocular. He really didn't want to do this, but he was told NERV was going to initiate Third Impact and end the world, not to mention he was given the order to destroy it. He knew perfectly well what he should do. "Commence the operation."

The sound of artillery fire, missile launching, and explosions filled the city of Tokyo-3 as tanks and missile trucks opened fire into NERV's missile batteries. The UN had been more than happy to provide a detailed map of NERV's exterior facility, as well as the blueprints for Central Dogma, allowing for the JSSDF forces to lay waste to their defensive measures before they even had a chance to use them. One by one, radar stations and turrets erupted into balls of fire and debris as high-explosive artillery rounds ripped through them and missiles set ablaze everything they came into contact with. Once NERV's exterior defenses were no more, the JSSDF foot soldiers began their approach, swiftly and violently procuring the entrances leading into the GeoFront.

As expected, NERV's security stood no chance against them. Those who managed to survive the initial encounters and were able to drop

their weapons and surrender either had their throats slit or a bullet put through their head.

"Radar station three has been destroyed!" Aoba yelled, "The Angel Intercept System is only twenty-one percent operational!"

"Where are Major Katsuragi and the pilots?" Fuyutsuki asked, a sense of dread spread through his chest.

"Major Katsuragi reporting in!" Misato suddenly emerged at the lower deck, walking toward the elevator. The technicians were confused since no security camera had picked up her image, and she just suddenly appeared from nowhere. However, they shook it off since there was more pressing matters at hands. "Good to see you, Major."

"Wait… Pilot Ikari had just finished changing and now heading to the EVA cages! Pilot Suzuhara and Pilot Horaki are inside the First Cranial Nerve ward! How did they get there without being noticed by our security cameras…" Makoto reported in confusion, "Still no sign of Pilot Ayanami!" He paused for a second, eyes went wide as he saw a certain redhead appeared in the video feed as well, "Pilot… Soryu?"

"I will explain later, now just accept it! Launch Unit D immediately when the pilots get inside!" Misato forced down a grin as she knew her charges had succeeded in rescuing their friends. She also knew that Rei was trying to find Gendo. 'Rei, please succeed,' she thought.

The second Unit D emerged onto the surface, all of the JSSDF's forces quickly locked onto the purple-crimson EVA and opened fire onto it before it could even move. Shinji and Asuka both flinched as the rain of cannon and missile fire smashed into the mech, but did little more than that. Conventional weapons were hardly capable of doing more than minor damage to an Evangelion, and all it did to the pilots was piss them off.

"What the Hell was that supposed to be?!" Asuka laughed maniacally as they willed for Unit D to begin moving. "Was it supposed to hurt?!" Dashing forward, the EVA leaped into the air and landed hard atop of a series of tanks, crushing them into piles of scorched junk and erupting into balls of fire. Once she planted her feet, the redhead caught sight of a barrage of missiles heading her way. Acting quickly, she swiped Unit D's lower left arm to the side, knocking all of the missiles off course and sending them crashing into the ground where they exploded on contact, taking down a line of tanks, humvees, and foot soldiers along with them.

Just as Unit D dug its right heel into the ground while it skidded across the GeoFront, the soldiers inside of the missile trucks quickly abandoned their vehicles and left them to be laid to waste by the monstrous machine.

"General! What are we going to do?!" Narrowing his eyes, the General glared at the purple-crimson death machine as it scooped up a tank and flung it with precise accuracy at one of the larger missile trucks, destroying both of them. Letting out a sigh, the General pulled his own radio out from his pocket and held it up to his mouth. He really didn't want for it to have to come to this. He really didn't want for SEELE to get involved, but he had no choice at this point. It was either they get involved, or he would have to let this mission fail. "Commence Operation Armageddon." Within a matter of seconds, all fire came to a halt. Shinji and Asuka found themselves stopping momentarily, confused by the JSSDF's sudden lack of resistance. Had they surrendered? Was it over? Did they win? From inside Unit D, she watched as the lines of the remaining vehicles pulled back and cleared out from the center of the GeoFront. "What the Hell's going on?" Asuka growled, beginning to feel uneasy about this whole situation. "Maya, Hyuga, somebody? What's going on?" Shinji asked, keeping a cautious eye on the surrounding forces.

"Shinji, Asuka, get down!" Maya's scream filled the cockpit, cracking up with static. "Wait, wha-"

A sudden jarring rumble shook the entire EVA Unit, knocking it off of its feet and onto the ground as a brilliant white light shone above it. The pilots could feel searing heat radiating from the light, but it wasn't quite able to come into contact with her. "they just dropped an N2 mine on us!"

"That's a little bit much!" Aoba scoffed, looking at the terminal. "Not only that, but we're detecting incoming aircraft."

Asuka rolled her eyes. "Ooh, a few VTOLs and helicopters. I'm so scared."

"These aren't combat aircrafts, Asuka." Maya's voice came across far too solemn for the Second Child's liking. "They're dropships."

"Dropships?" She raised an eyebrow. "Shit, the MP EVAs!"

Twelve large V-shaped aircraft soared over the GeoFront, each craft carrying some sort of strange figure on their belly. The abnormal white figures slowly pulled themselves away from the underside of the aircraft and scanned their surroundings as unmanned Entry Plugs shot into the back of their necks, bringing them into a fully aware state of consciousness. The one locked into the belly of the lowest flying aircraft, the eldest of the twelve let a sick smile spread across its fish-like head as it disengaged from the locks holding it in place, allowing for it to begin freefalling before sprouting a great pair of angelic wings from its back, gliding across the air as it descended into the now fully exposed GeoFront. The other eleven followed suit, dropping from their respective aircrafts and unfolding their wings, following in its path as it started to orbiting around Unit D from above. The nine giant humanoid machines flew around in the purple-crimson Evangelion in the same way that buzzards would circle their dying prey, waiting for the moment to swoop down and devour the remains.

"There are TWELVE of them?" Asuka shouted in disbelief, but she regained her confidence in a second, "hmph, just adds more to my glory!"

"Asuka, this is not the time! We need to focus!" Shinji said, a bit panicking as his memories resurfaced, "We… we need to…"

"Don't worry, Baka," Asuka reassured him, "We need to destroy the cores, or they will keep regenerating!"

Inside of the Command Center, Fuyutsuki narrowed his eyes. "They're sending the MP EVAs here?" He murmured to himself. "They couldn't possibly be planning to…" Leaning forward into the microphone, the Commander called out to the pilot of Unit D.

"Just be careful."

"I'll try not to have too much fun." The redhead smirked, tightening the grip on her controls as the winged beasts lowered themselves onto the ground, pulling their wings inside of their bodies and brandishing their large, dual-bladed swords.

The pilots quickly chose their first target; not giving it any time to prepare for them, both Shinji and Asuka willed Unit D lunged forward and smashed its right foot directly into the top of the Evangelion's skull, shattering the top of its cranium, and exposing the gore beneath it as the top of its fish-like head exploded into a cloud of blood-red LCL before dropping limply to the ground. They took its weapon as it transformed into the shape of Lance of Longinus, and stabbed it right into the defeated MP EVA's core.

One down, eleven to go.

Deep down inside Central Dogma, Rei Ayanami gazed at the bloodied pool of LCL filled with half-rotted limbs and small fragments of what used to be her fellow clones. The blue-haired girl slowly stepped back towards the tube in the center of the circular room and scanned her eyes across the comatose body that was Gendo Ikari.

She had found herself lost in a near hypnotic state, feeling compelled to come to this very chamber and see the rotten remains

of her dead sisters.

Turning around, Rei's vision suddenly changed. She now could see an overlooking view of the cityscape of Tokyo-3, but it was much different than she remembered. The buildings were decrepit and crumbling, long since abandon. Past the city, she could see the ocean, but instead of it flowing with its calming blue waters, it ran thick with dark red spreading out as far as she could see, giant red crosses protruding from random points with hideous white beasts crucified on them.

"Where am I?" She asked, feeling a presence emerge behind her. Slowly, she turned around and came face to face with a boy who, in a way looked much like her. His skin fair and his eyes red. Like her, he stood before her in the nude. Rei recognized him as Kaworu Nagisa.

"This is the future that you will create." Kaworu answered, stepping past her and making his way towards her as he gazed down at the desolate city. "You are to be the one who will bring about the death of the world you know, and let it become reborn anew."

"I… I will cause this?" The blue-haired girl slowly stepped next to the silver-haired boy. "How?"

"You are Lilith. You are the one who will bring about Instrumentality."

"No." Rei shook her head. "I am me. I have my own will. I do not wish to hurt Shinji, Asuka, or Misato. I have made my decision."

The boy turned his head to face her. "You cannot deny your own destiny. You are to create this world through rebirth."

"No. This is not the world that I want."

"But why, Lilith? By creating this world, you will be giving humanity the gift of true transcendence. Humanity will pool into one collective consciousness that will create the ultimate being." Ayanami moved

her sharp crimson eyes and beamed them into the boy's. "If humanity is to become something new, then wouldn't that just mean that it would really be humanity's extinction?"

The boy smirked. "As I said, death must come before rebirth."

"Just who are you? You're not the Kaworu Nagisa I knew…"

Kaworu chuckled, "Perceptive, I must say. No, I am not the seventeenth Angel you know of. In fact, I am Adam."

"Adam?" Rei narrowed her eyes, "how did you…"

"The person… who was in charge of NERV had me planted in his hands. When Tabris died, the soul he carried was freed, and it came and found me. Fortunately, at the time I was soaked inside LCL - thus I can recreate this body."

"Still." She spoke, stepping forth, staring into the eyes of the giant head off in the distance. "This is not the world that I want."

"And why is that?"

"Because, this is not the world that Shinji would want."

He chuckled, managing a very visible grin. "I guess we really are alike after all." Letting out a sigh, his grin began to slowly turn into a frown. "Unfortunately, that means that you have chosen this future instead." The boy made a gesture with his right hand, and the world around them began to morph before Rei's very eyes.

The clear sky became thick with black clouds, hiding away the bright stars and the bloodstained moon. The derelict buildings of Tokyo-3 lit ablaze as a great fire filled the metropolis. The blood red ocean turned a darker shade of blue as giant battleships and aircraft carriers rose from the depths, brilliant flashes of light filling the sky as thunderous booms of their cannon fire echoed through the air. Then, the final thing to appear was the figure of two colossal humanoid

machines trading blows along the coast. One of them Rei was immediately able to recognize as Unit D, the other, however, was one she had never seen before. It shared a similar build, but its details were impossible to make out.

"What is this?" She sounded almost disgusted by the sight of this horrible place.

"I've already told you, this is the future you have chosen." The silver-haired boy replied. "While the world I presented you with before may not have been the most desired outcome, this is the one that is destined to happen should mankind continue to survive." As the two Evangelions on the beach traded blows, Unit D took hold of its opponent by the neck and slammed it onto the sandy beach, keeping its hands wrapped tightly around its throat.

"What happened?" Ayanami growled, feeling a tinge of anger rising within her. "Why is this what will happen if mankind continues to survive?"

"Because, Lilin are doomed to fight until the end of time. It is just what they do best." He replied. "While preventing Instrumentality may give you a moment's peace, what's to follow is nothing but death, destruction, and hardship." While Unit D held its opponent down, the pinned EVA reached up and tightly wrapped its own hands around Unit D's throat, tightening its grip with each second that passed.

"I do not believe you."

"Believe what you want. This is what is destined to happen should Instrumentality be prevented." With a loud, bone-chilling crack, Unit D's head fell limp along with the rest of its body while the Evangelion it had pinned down rose onto its feet, keeping the lifeless Unit D in its grasp. Belting out a roar of fury, the ground shook at the monstrous machine's cry.

"Do you truly believe that this is the future Shinji wants?" Staring dumbfounded at the sight, Rei felt a pit in her stomach. Was this truly to be the final outcome if she were to not allow for Instrumentality to commence? Was this just a doomed world that could not truly be saved? "What should I do?"

"I'm here to offer you a choice." The boy smirked. "You are the one who controls the future, and I will present a new path to you."

"Which is?"

"A world without Evangelions."

Rei blinked. "How would we do that?"

"Reversing the time."

"Shinji had informed me you said time is irreversible."

"Not exactly reversing time - but similar enough. We couldn't do this before since during all the previous cycles, we only had Adam, Lilith, Unit 01, and Lilin. Now the situation is different."

"I do not understand."

"Now, we have two more Angel level beings in this world, their power akin to us."

"Shinji and Asuka?" Rei said, her eyes narrowing, "what about them?"

"With their help, the combined power of four of us would be enough to recreate a new world. We could manage to recreate a world without Second Impact happening," Kaworu's smirk grew wider, "more than enough, don't you think?"

"Die, you bastard!" Asuka shrieked, tackling one of the EVAs into the giant artificial lake, throttling it while she held it underwater. Opening

her right shoulder pylon, she ejected her progressive knife and struck down onto the Evangelion's grotesque face, spewing a fountain of gore into the water, reddening it as she stabbed into it again and again, watching as its hands clenched and its body started to spasm violently until finally going limp. She then pulled the knife out of its skull, and stabbed it right into its core. The core cracked, but her knife also broke. Discarding the handle of the broken blade, the pilots raised their fists, and slammed into the core. It finally shattered after a dozen of ground-breaking punches.

Turning around, the pilots caught sight of two of the MP EVAs closing in on them, their dual-bladed weapons at the ready. The first went for a low swing, which Unit D was easily able to leap over and counter by slamming its foot down onto the blade, knocking it out of her opponent's hand. The second one was a bit harder to avoid, forcing Unit D to rely on catching the blade with her bare hand. Shinji and Asuka cringed, feeling the sharp pain of the blade cutting into Unit D's hand. Bubbles from the LCL started to form around the pilots' actual hands as it absorbed the blood leaking from their plug suit. Their sync ratio was too high to not receive real damage.

However, a high synch ratio was not without its benefits. It allowed for them to do far more than just control their EVA better, it enhanced its strength tenfold as well. Pulling hard, the pilots yanked the blade out of the enemy's hand and grasped the heavy blade, making a giant horizontal cleave, cutting through both of the EVA's standing before them, bisecting them at the waist, drenching the surrounding area with blood-red LCL. After breaking their cores, Asuka counted, "Four down, eight to go."

Looking intently at Lilith's crucified body, Rei was having a turmoil of thoughts running through her head. Kaworu, or Adam in this case, was simply waiting aside her, grinning. The large chamber was quieter than usual, probably caused by Rei's drastically shifting AT-Field.

'If I destroy Adam, and refuse to merge with Lilith, then the EVAs will preserve, humanity will become its own enemy. In that case, Shinji and Asuka will most likely be forced to continue to pilot against other humans. There will be two possible outcomes; one of them dies, and the other will be devastated. Or they both live, but at least Shinji will suffer emotionally since he does not wish to harm another human. I… do not wish harm to Shinji. I want him to be happy. As long as EVAs exist, there will be chances he gets hurt.'

'The choice Kaw-Adam offers is… alluring. It sounds too good to be true… I can feel there are some things he wasn't honest with me.'

Rei took a deep breath, and turned her look at Kaworu, "About your offer… can I ask what is your motive?"

Kaworu chuckled, "Simple. The same as yours," he kept his smirk, "I want Shinji to be happy."

"What will happen to them if we help them to… reverse the time?"

Kaworu's expression suddenly became serious, "During the process, they will become Gods."

Rei blinked, "If that's the case… I am more willing to help you. But I figure there is something you're not honest with me, Adam."

Kaworu chuckled, "You are intelligent, to say the least, Lilith. The Shinji and Asuka who are fighting up there right now are not the original Shinji and Asuka from this world. The process will make those two Gods… What will happen next… I cannot predict. I do not exactly have references, do I?"

Rei took a deep breath, "What do we need to do?"

"Simple. We merge with Lilith's body, and find our way to Shinji and Asuka. Then we will create a small instrumentality with only four of us; we will need to use the Lance of Longinus as well…" He trailed off, his face suddenly clouded, "This is not good."

"What?" Rei asked.

"Unit D hasn't awakened yet."

"Son of a bitch!" Unit D held back one of the EVAs while it snapped its neck wildly with the lower hands, while at the same time Shinji used the upper hands, blocking the attack from another one. Asuka then grabbed its head and began pulling in the opposite direction of Shinji. The EVA was torn in half and fell lifelessly on the ground. Both of their cores were destroyed then.

The third and fourth Mass-Produced Evangelions bum-rushed her whilst swinging their great blades. The purple-crimson mech leaped upwards, shooting itself high above its opponents before crashing both feet down onto the skull of the one to its left, digging its heels into it after forcing it to the ground. Unit D then spun in place like a ballerina on point, digging its left foot even further into the cranium of the downed EVA, drilling a hole through its head while the pilots delivered a spinning roundhouse kick to the one still standing on its feet, knocking it back. Taking its blade from the MP EVA, Unit D threw it at another incoming EVA, piercing through its core right away. Looking down at its feet, Unit D finished off the MP EVA under its left foot with a hard step on the core, and turned to the other EVA that just regained its composure, with another EVA approaching.

Seeing how close both of them were in proximity to each other, Shinji and Asuka brought Unit D down into a kneeling position and opened up the tops of its right shoulder pylon, shooting giant titanium spikes out from it, ripping right through the heads and upper torsos of both EVAs. LCL spewed from their wounds as they both bellowed in pain before limply toppling over and crashing to the ground, shaking the entire GeoFront upon landing.

After destroying their cores, both Shinji and Asuka snorted, "Only Four to go." They could feel the bloodlust coursing through her veins as she turned to face the remaining MP EVAs. Asuka sneered, delivering a hard blow to the abdomen of the Fourth-to-last MP EVA,

ripping Unit D's lower right fist through the guts of its opponent, spilling out its intestine onto the ground, staining the artificial grass red as the LCL gushed onto it. It writhed in pain and anguish while the purple-crimson mech dug its hand further into it, coming out of its back, ripping straight through its spine, gripping onto its core. Shinji helped her using the upper hands, nipping the core with tremendous force.

With the sheer amount of adrenaline surging through their bodies, both pilots only had one thought on their minds.

'I'll kill you.'

"Oh my God, Shinji and Asuka's sync ratio has increased to eight-hundred percent!" Maya cried out in panic.

Unit D's eyes lit up; wings of light expanded from its back. The MP EVA's core exploded under thousands of tons of force.

Kaworu looked up as the ground shook, a smile appeared on his face. "She's finally awakened." His smile disappeared as quickly, "That also means Shinji and Asuka might be in danger right now. Lilith, you need to make your decision."

Rei closed her eyes, immersed in her thoughts. She didn't want Shinji to be near anything EVA-related ever again. "You said we can go back as far as before the Second Impact… I am assuming you mean it won't happen again. Or the there's no purpose of doing it."

Kaworu shook his head gently, "It might still happen, but at least Shinji and Asuka are out of it, correct? Isn't that more than enough?"

"How can you be so sure? We do not even know if they'll survive using them as the energy source of recreating the new world," Rei said coldly.

"But it's our best shot, is it not?"

Rei thought about it again carefully. It was simple, only two choices were presented to her, but at the same time, it was the hardest choice she had to make ever. In comparison betraying Gendo was a much easier one.

She knew what Kaworu said was true - humans will fight with each other using the EVAs. It was a dead-end, no matter what. She also realized that she could abort Instrumentality at any time she wanted. The best choice would be to initiate Instrumentality, and ask what Shinji and Asuka wanted.

Rei let out a breath she had been holding too long, "I shall proceed as you instruct."

The three remaining MP EVAs formed a formation around the ascending Unit D, all of them carried a replica of the Lance of Longinus. One of the MP EVAs aimed at Unit D's left hand and threw the Lance at it, trying to impale the purple-crimson behemoth.

Just to be knocked aside by another Lance.

Shinji and Asuka blinked in surprise, as Misato's voice sounded in the comm channel, "Shinji, Asuka! The Lance of Longinus moved on its own! Take it!"

"The *real* Lance?" The pilots said in unison, taking a strong grip of the Lance.

"Correct, now kill those bastards!"

"Roger." Shinji and Asuka smiled, "why didn't we take it at the beginning of the fight?" Asuka mocked.

"Hmmm… we are stupid?"

"Hmph. Now focus on the fight!"

Unit D expanded its wing of light, and flew toward the weaponless MP EVA Unit. It tried to escape, but Unit D's mobility was far better than the subpar MP models. The Lance pierced through its core effortlessly. Another MP EVA charged toward Unit D, wielding the replica of Lance. Unit D pulled its Lance out of the MP EVA; with a vicious swing, two Lance clashed head-on, and the fake Lance broke in half. "Ha! Fake is fake!" Asuka exclaimed.

Finishing it off with ease, Unit D turned to the last active MP EVA.

"Let me handle this, Shinji." Asuka said, "unless… you also want to enjoy it."

Shinji closed his eyes, feeling his anger rising as he once again recalled Asuka's painful scream when her Unit 02 was torn apart by the MP EVAs. "I'll do it with you, Asuka." He said firmly, taking a deep breath, "I'll make it suffer… for what they had done to you."

"All MP EVAs are eliminated!" Maya reported happily, "no energy spikes detec… wait."

"What? What happened?" Misato asked.

"Pattern Blue!" Makoto yelled as the klaxons sounded again, "It's… no it's not an Angel, it's a human!"

As the technicians were still trying to figure out what was happening, a giant white Rei Ayanami emerged from the bottom of the command deck, passing through everything like they weren't there. People watched in awe as the figure ascended, reaching for Unit D.

"It's happening again… just like fifteen years ago," Maya said as she saw the readings on her terminal, "Is this the answer I was looking for?"

Outside in the GeoFront, Shinji and Asuka were also stunned to see Lilith reaching for them. Their first thoughts were somehow Rei

betrayed them and chose to help Gendo to start Third Impact, but the thoughts were quickly squashed as they knew Lilith wouldn't be reaching for them if Rei really chose Gendo. So instead they waited.

And that proved to be a good choice.

Shinji and Asuka slowly opened their eyes, found themselves floating in space. Standing in front of them were Rei Ayanami and Kaworu Nagisa.

"Rei! Kaworu!" Shinji said, panicking, "What is this place? Did Instrumentality happen again?"

"No. This is a small Instrumentality only between the four of us. And I'm not Kaworu the Seventeenth Angel. I'm Adam."

"I am Lilith." Rei said.

Asuka swallowed, "So… I guess you have a reason to bring us here, right?"

"Indeed. We're here to offer you a choice." Kaworu smirked, "The fate of the world depends on you, Shinji and Asuka."

"Yeah, whatever. What are the choices, though?"

"It all depends on what your heart wishes for," Rei said, "we simply listen to your wishes."

"But what can I wish for if I don't know what are the choices?" Shinji asked, confused, "or can I just wish for whatever I want?"

"That is correct."

"Okay… so, I want to abort Instrumentality." Shinji said, turning to look at Asuka, who gave him a nod.

"That is acceptable, but I must warn you," Kaworu said, "after this, the world will still have Evangelion technologies. Humans are never

meant to possess such power; thus, the only outcome would be wars fought using EVAs."

"Does that mean… Asuka and I will be fighting against other EVAs, piloted by other humans?"

"Most likely."

"If that's the case… then I want a world without Evangelions."

"There's only one way of doing this," Kaworu smiled as Shinji made the right choice, "reversing the time."

"Huh? But I thought you said it's impossible."

"It is, but what I'm suggesting is different. We can recreate a new world without Second Impact happening. To do this, your powers will be needed as well." Kaworu said as he pointed his fingers at Shinji and Asuka, "Lilith and I won't be able to provide the energy required. But with your help, it is feasible."

"What will happen to us, then?" Asuka asked.

"You two will become Gods."

"WHAT?" They both shouted.

Kaworu chuckled, "akin to us, you can live without needing a physical body. Actually, right now, your physical bodies have already ceased to exist since both of you have over four hundred percent of sync ratio with the EVA."

"What about Second Impact though? It may still happen, right?"

"Maybe, maybe not. But that is not your concern."

"But the new world may still have us in them!"

"And I want all the details first!" Asuka said, "what's the world gonna look like?"

"We… don't exactly know, but the world will be relatively the same. The only major difference would be the absence of Second Impact, and everything, including people's memories, will change accordingly. Try to visualize what the world would look like in 2015 if Second Impact didn't happen in 2000?"

"A world… where Asuka and I go to school like normal teenagers?"

"We don't even know if you would exist in that world in the first place," Kaworu said, "but this can give you some insight."

Shinji and Asuka fell silent. The choices were laid down in front of them. They could either abort Instrumentality and face a post-Angel wars world where superpowers would want to use EVAs as military, reset the world and start another cycle, or accept Adam and Lilith's offer.

'I don't want to pilot an EVA ever again, but Asuka may want to. There's no way I can leave her to fight alone. And I don't want to hurt other people. As for creating a new world… I wonder if it will do anything. Second Impact may still happen, just not in 2000. Maybe the world will go on for another cycle, with different people suffering, different people to pilot… and the whole becoming God thing… at least I can be with Asuka forever, not so bad, eh?'

'I mean, becoming a God certainly sounds alluring, and this way I can literally be with Shinji forever, but what about people in this new world? Shinji and I were both born around 2001, that means even if we exist in the new world, we won't become EVA pilots since only children born after the Second Impact can pilot the EVAs. Maybe we can finally be excused from the responsibility of saving the world, after all we've been through.'

Both Shinji and Asuka turned to look at each other, determination in their eyes. Although they both didn't like the idea of the possibility of

Second Impact happening again in the new world, but compared to the other options, this one carried the most hope. They both nodded, "We accept your offer."

In the real world, everyone on the command deck watched in awe as Unit D turned into a bright white giant with the Lance of Longinus in its hands, a halo appearing above its head. Lilith held the ascending Unit D in her hands; giant white wings spread behind her body. The whole world was covered in brightness as Lilith, Adam, Shinji, and Asuka's S2 engines overloaded, turning the world into an unknown direction.

AN: There are still one more very short chapter and an Epilogue.

After

AN: There will be an Epilogue about the God Shinji and Asuka's life, as well as explanations of this new world. Stay tuned!

I do not own Evangelion.

Chapter 17: After

Under the cerulean sky and scattered clouds, two human silhouettes laid on the beach aside from the blue ocean. One of them wearing a yellow sundress, a violet choker, and two red bead-shaped hair clips; the other wearing a school uniform with white shirt and black trousers. The cool breeze of the sea wind gently blew across the two of them. The girl with yellow sundress stirred, opening her eyes slowly.

Saying she was confused would be a heavy understatement.

The last thing she remembered was the ride on *Over the Rainbow*, and the next second she was here. Looking to her left, she saw something even more strange.

Two people, one in a red plug suit she recognized as hers, and another in white and bule plug suit. She blinked, and the two of them disappeared.

'Was that… me?'

Looking to her right, she saw a boy with dark-brown hair laying aside her, presumably sleeping.

Suddenly anger surged through her body. She just woke up on a beach, having no memory of how she got here, and laying aside a BOY she didn't recognize. The only logical explanation she could come up with at the moment was the boy somehow abducted her

and took her here - she didn't dare to think what he might have done with her. Nothing appropriate she could think of.

Before she could even realize she found her hands already clasping around the boy's throat. She tightened her grip, and the boy finally opened his eyes. She saw confusion, panic, fear, pain - and oxygen deprivation in his eyes.

She didn't think rationally. All she had in her mind was, 'I'll kill you. I'll kill you. I'll kill you.'

Suddenly she felt warmth on her left cheek. She found herself being caressed by the boy. Her mind was screaming to her to keep going, but there was an unspoken familiarity of the caress, and her body reacted on its own. She loosened her grip, allowing the boy to breathe.

The boy panted heavily, trying to get as much oxygen as possible.

"How disgusting…" She murmured, "why is my body reacting this way?"

"I'm sorry… but, hmm, could you please get off me?" The boy suddenly spoke after a few seconds of heavy panting.

To her surprise, she immediately complied and rolled off his body, but she kept her death-glare directed at him. She could still see the fear in the boy's eyes, much to her satisfaction.

SLAP

The boy rubbed his red cheek in surprise, "Hey! What was that for?"

"What do you think, dummkopf?" She yelled, "who the fuck are you and where the fuck are we?"

Her words were a cue for him as the boy quickly looked around, a confused frown appeared on his face. "I… don't know?"

"Don't bullshit me, asshole! You took me here and must've raped me! I should've killed you just then!" She said as she once again leaped forward, pinning the boy on the beach, "Speak what you know, or I'll kill you right now!"

"Wha-what? What are you talking about? I-what?" The boy panicked, "hey, I just woke up here with you strangling me! It's more like you wanted to rape me, not me you!"

She didn't want to believe it, but her mind was telling her that he was telling the truth. So she slapped him again and stood up. "Then what do you remember?"

"why should I tell you? I can't trust someone who tried to kill me!"

"Listen, I don't give a shit about your trust, I only care about what happened to me!" She shouted, "okay, I'll tell you my story. I was on a ship, and the next second I woke up here! You laying aside me!" She took a deep breath, "and you blame *me* for trying to kill you?"

The boy gulped, "I… sorry. But I can say I have a similar experience as you. I was on a helicopter… and the next second I woke up here, you strangling me."

"What? How is that possible?" She said, "You are not suggesting that we both got drugged and dropped here, are you?"

"I… don't know?" He frowned, "how can I know something like that?"

She closed her eyes, trying to think rationally. Damn, she had a college degree! The last thing she wanted to do now was to let emotions, not logic, guide her actions. Normally she didn't exactly put effort into controlling her temper, but under stressful situations like this, she needed to think.

'If we ARE both drugged and sent here, there must be some common features among us. Might as well ask him a few questions. But I need to make the first step, considering I did try to kill him.' She

thought. Turning to look at the very confused boy, she spoke. "Asuka."

"Huh?"

"My name, Asuka! Are you stupid or something?" Asuka sighed, "What's your name?"

"Oh… sorry. I'm Shinji."

"Hmmm… sounds like a Baka."

AN: This is the official ending of NGE: Sincerely Yours, and also the prologue of the direct sequel - You can (not) redo.

Epilogue

Chapter 18: Epilogue

"Asuka, there is a problem."

"Can it wait? I'm trying not to have too much fun dissecting Zeruel here."

"Asuka, you know it's just a reality we created."

"C'mon, being a God certainly grants you some privilege."

"Still, we have a more pressing matter at hand!"

"Gott, you're pretty pathetic being a God, you know that?"

Asuka sighed and stopped tearing Zeruel apart. The world around her paused as she thought. Turning around to Shinji, she asked, "What now, darling?"

"We were left on earth."

"What do you mean by 'we'?"

"Hmmm… our… the original us in this world?"

Asuka blinked, "You mean… the Shinji and Asuka in this world… before we came here?"

"Precisely."

"Scheiße. Do they… remember anything?"

"Not likely. That Asuka… just strangled me."

"Oh fuck. Did I… kill you?"

"No. I caressed your face, and you stopped."

"Great, what do we do… about them?"

Shinji sighed, "I thought about… leaving the world as it be. But now seeing *us* in there… I can't just…"

"Me neither. We need to do something."

"But our powers… we can't physically interfere with the world!"

"But we can interact with our… counterparts, right? We can act as guides; we need to guide our counterparts to prevent the Second Impact!"

"Sounds like a plan to me."

"But how do we do it, to be specific? And… speaking of our counterparts, do they still have S2 organs, since they… possess *our* former bodies?"

"Yes, they do, but they are completely dormant, I guess it's because since Second Impact hasn't happened yet, S2 organs are also deactivated."

"Now the problem solved itself then. I mean, as soon as Second Impact happens, their S2 organs will activate, right? Then they still have potential to prevent it without EVAs, or at least stop it."

"I guess you are right."

Without another word, the two teenage Gods discarded the fake reality they created for entertainment, and once more returned to the world they once left.

AN: Phew! It's finally done! Hope you enjoyed the story, and my greatest gratitude to everyone who commented, followed, faved, and read my story. Isn't this interesting… now we have two pairs of Shinji

and Asuka, and I wonder how the God Shinji and Asuka will help the original but oblivious Shinji and Asuka?

I'm having a direct sequel for this story - You can (not) redo.

At the same time I'm revising NGE: Sincerely Yours to correct grammatical mistakes.